

THE

MORAL OF FLOWERS.

THE
MORAL OF FLOWERS,

ILLUSTRATED BY COLOURED ENGRAVINGS.

' Needs no show of mountain hoary,
 Winding shore, or deepening glen,
Where the landscape in its glory,
 Teaches truth to wandering men .
Give true hearts but earth and sky,
And some flowers to bloom and die,
Homely scenes and simple views
Lowly thoughts may best infuse."

" Consider the lilies of the field."

Third Edition.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMAN;

AND

M. ROBINSON, LEEDS.

1836.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THE THIRD EDITION.

A THIRD edition of the “Moral of Flowers” having been called for, the Author feels it necessary to account for the omission of some of the subjects which appeared in the former ones.

It has been suggested to her, that the extension of her design to trees would not only be interesting, but would render it more complete; and the success of her previous undertaking has encouraged her to attempt it. She has, therefore, abstracted from this work the few papers on trees which were inserted in the former editions, as being somewhat foreign to the title, and as more properly appertaining to the volume she hopes soon to present to the public...

The present edition will, however, contain an equal quantity of matter with the first, as several additional subjects have been introduced.

A. U., 1836.

PREFACE.

IN these rhyming days, when almost every one lays claim to some acquaintance with the muse, vanity can hope so little from the distinction of authorship, that the writer of the following pages would humbly trust some better feeling has induced ~~her~~ to offer them to the public.

Many of the pieces were written long before the subject of Flowers was so fashionable as it has now become. They owe their origin, in fact, to the request of a friend who wished for a few poetical sketches to accompany her own drawings; and the appearance of one of them (how obtained the writer is not aware) in a little work of the day, first suggested the idea that, if collected into one volume, they might possibly be acceptable to many readers, from

the moral and religious hints they convey. She hopes, also, though fully 'sensible how open many of them are to criticism, that the universal interest of the subject will procure for them the indulgence of the public.

Flowers are a delight to every one ; to some, perhaps, merely for their beauty and fragrance ; to others, independently of these acknowledged charms, for the varied pleasurable associations and thoughts they suggest. And foremost amongst these is the assurance they afford of the exuberant goodness of God. " The provision which is made of a variety of objects not necessary to life, and ministering only to our pleasures, shows," says an elegant and learned author, " a further design than that of giving existence ; it speaks an intention to superadd pleasure to that existence." And who does not feel this when he looks on the hedgerow and the mead,

" Full of fresh verdure and unnumber'd flowers,
The intelligence of nature ?"

Nor is this the only lesson they impart; they remind us also of the superintending providence of the Almighty. After contemplating the more stupendous features of creation, "the heavens, the work of His fingers, the moon and the stars which He has ordained," till, overwhelmed with a sense of littleness, we exclaim, almost with feelings of despondency, "Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him!" has not the sight of a flower so carefully provided for, so exquisitely wrought, and so lavishly endowed with fragrance, recalled the mind to its proper tone, and given emphasis to the question, "Are ye not much better than they?"

But it is when viewed as types of the resurrection that they most vividly affect the imagination and touch the heart. The same inspired volume which tells us "all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field," reminds us also that "that which is sown is not quickened except it die." When, therefore, after the dreary, deathlike months

of winter, we see the “prodigies which power divine performs,” clothing each tree and flower in its peculiar and appropriate beauty, who but must acquiesce in the conclusion of the poet, and say,

“ Shall I be left abandon'd in the dust,
 When fate, relenting, lets the flower revive?
 Shall Nature's voice, to Man alone unjust,
 Bid him though doom'd to perish hope to live?
 Is it for this fair Virtue oft must strive
 With disappointment, penury, and pain?
 No: Heaven's immortal spring shall yet arrive,
 And Man's majestic beauty bloom again
 Bright through the eternal year of love's triumphant reign.”

The writer takes this opportunity of acknowledging her obligations to the various authors whose works she has laid under contribution, and particularly to Sir J. E. Smith, and Dr. Drummond, to whom she is mainly indebted for the botanical information contained in the introductions to the several pieces.

The engravings accompanying them, as well

as the drawings from which they were taken (and which have been all made from nature expressly for the work), are the production of Mr. William Clark, formerly draughtsman and engraver to the London Horticultural Society ; a sufficient guarantee, it is presumed, for the excellence of their execution.

. CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Wood Anemone, Bush Vetch, and Cowslip.....	1
Field Flowers	8
Snowdrop and Crocus.....	10
Almond Blossom.....	14
Daffodil	18
Rosemary and Violet	21
Daisy	29
Primrose	34
Speedwell.....	39
Crown-Imperial	43
Wild Wall-flower	47
Heartsease, or Pansy Violet.....	51
Forget-me-not.....	56
Lily of the Valley.....	59
Common Broom.....	64
Dame's Violet	68
Dog-Rose.....	72
Youth's Emblems.....	76
Scarlet Pimpernel.....	78
Evening Primrose.....	81
Woody Nightshade, or Bitter-sweet.....	84
Rose	89
White Rose	98
Woodbine or Honeysuckle.....	103
White Water Lily	107
Air-Plant.....	113
Rusty-leaved Rhododendron.....	117

XIV

	PAGE
Sensitive Plant	122
Jasmine	126
Myrtle	131
Heath	136
Dark-flowered Stock-Gilliflower	140
Maidenhair	144
Common Bramble, or Blackberry	149
Grass of Parnassus	154
Harebell and Grass	157
Traveller's Joy	160
Meadow-Saffron	163
Michaelmas Daisy	169
Black Hellebore, or Christmas Rose	172
White Poppy	175
Star of Bethlehem	185
Passion-flower	188

LIST OF PLATES.

PLATE	PAGE
I. Wood Anemone, Bush Vetch, and Cowslip	1
II. Snowdrop and Crocus	10
III. Almond Blossom	14
IV. Rosemary and Violet	21
V. Daisy	29
VI. Primrose	34
VII. Speedwell	39
VIII. Wall-flower	47
IX. Heartscase	51
X. Forget-me-not	56
XI. Lily of the Valley	59
XII. Dog-Rose	72
XIII. Pimpernel	78
XIV. Nightshade	84
XV. Woodbine	103
XVI. Rhododendron	117
XVII. Jasmine	126
XVIII. Myrtle	131
XIX. Heath	136
XX. Bramble	149
XXI. Harebell and Grass	157
XXII. Michaelmas Daisy	169
XXIII. Passion-flower	188

THE MORAL OF FLOWERS.

THE WOOD ANEMONE—BUSH VETCH- AND COWSLIP.

* THE WOOD ANEMONE OR WIND FLOWER.

ANEMONE NEMOROSA.

“ And coy anemone, that ne'er uncloses
Her lips until they 're blown on by the wind.”

THE name of this elegant little flower is derived “ from the Greek, *ανεμος*, wind; some say, because the flower opens only when the wind blows; others, because it grows in situations exposed to the wind.” The sun, however, seems to have full as much influence over it, as it always looks towards him, closing its petals when

he sets, and before rain. Its short-lived beauty is thus alluded to by Sir W. Jones : -

“ Youth, like a thin anemone, displays
His silken leaf and in a morn decays.”

The anemone is one of the many flowers which, according to ancient fable, sprung from the tears of Venus and the blood of Adonis. Indeed, we learn from the same authority that to the latter it owed what it has to colour : —

“ The boy with whom love seem'd to die
Bleeds in this pale anemony.”

THE BUSH VETCH.

VICIA SEPIUM.

“ What landscapes I read in the sweet cowslip's looks !
What pictures of pebbles and minnowy brooks
In the vetches that tangle the shore ! ”

THOUGH the vetch, with its curling tendrils and pea-like blossoms, forms so elegant a variety among other spring flowers, it has obtained but little poetical dis-

tinction. It may, however, justly claim a place amongst those which Thomson beautifully designates "the lowly children of the shade," for it is seen in close companionship with all the simple blossoms, which so profusely adorn our hedgerows and thickets in May and June. Paley, who hallowed science by making it subserve the cause of religion, and whose constant aim it was to point out, to the less enlightened, the goodness, skill, and power of the great Creator manifested "in these his lowest works," singles out the papilionaceous tribe as affording a striking instance of the care evinced in the structure of plants, for the perfecting of the seed; and, what is part of the same intention, the preserving of it until it be perfected. "The parts of fructification are enclosed," says he, "within a beautiful folding of the internal blossom, sometimes called, from its shape, the boat or keel; itself also protected under a penthouse formed by the external parts. This structure is very artificial, and, what adds to the value of it, though it may diminish the curiosity, very general. It has also this further advantage (and it is an advantage strictly mechanical), that all the blossoms turn their *backs* to the wind, whenever the gale blows strong enough to endanger the delicate parts upon which the seed depends. It is an aptitude which

results from the figure of the flower, and, as we have said, is strictly mechanical.”

This tribe also exhibits the phenomenon of what Linnæus calls “the sleep of the plant,” and to one of the species we are indebted for his first observation of the fact. “A friend” had presented him with some seeds of one of these plants, which he sowed in his green-house, and they soon produced two beautiful flowers. His gardener was absent when he first remarked them, and in the evening he took him with a lantern to see them, but the flowers were nowhere to be found, so that he himself thought they had been destroyed by some accident; but, to his great surprise, next morning he found his flowers just where they had been the day before; that evening, too, they were not to be seen, but the next morning they looked as fresh as ever. The gardener thought these could not be the same flowers, but must have blown since. Linnæus, however, was not so easily satisfied, but, as soon as it was dark, he once more visited the plant; and, after lifting up all the leaves, one by one, he found the two flowers folded up, and so closely concealed, that at first sight it was impossible to discover what they were.”

THE COWSLIP.

FRIMULA VERIS.

‘ rich in vegetable gold
 From calyx pale the freckled cowslip born,
 Receives in amber cups the fragrant dews of morn.”

FEW flowers have obtained more poetic homage than the cowslip. Skakspeare has immortalised it in many passages, but more especially in the well-known lines,

“ The cowslips tall her pensioners be,
 In their gold coats spots we see,
 These be rubies, fairy favours,
 In those freckles live their savours.”

Its growing on a tall upright stem probably suggested to him the idea of giving it a place in the court of his Fairy Queen, in allusion to the tall military courtiers called Queen Elizabeth’s pensioners. It seems, however, of a very plastic character, assuming every appearance fancy wills. Milton, when he would “strew the laureat hearse where Lycid lies,” speaks of

“ Cowslips wan that hang the pensive head.”

He introduces it again more cheerfully in Sabrina's song: —

“ Whilst from off the waters flec
 Thus I set my printless feet,
 O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
 That bends not as I tread.”

But, not to multiply quotations (for it is every poet's theme), I will only select in addition a few very beautiful lines from Clare's Village Minstrel, where he invests this little favourite with a devotional character: —

“ Bowing adorers of the gale,
 Ye cowslips, delicately pale,
 Upraise your loaded stems :
 Unfold your cups of splendour, speak !
 Who deck'd you with that ruddy streak
 And gilt your golden gems?

“ Ye lovely flowers of lowly birth,
 Embroiderers of the carpet earth,
 That stud the velvet sod ;
 Open to spring's refreshing air,
 In sweetest smiling bloom declare
 Your Maker and your God.”

The above quotations, and the thousand others of a similar character which crowd on the mind, bring to

remembrance the remarks of an elegant transatlantic writer, on "the rural feeling which runs through British literature, continued down from 'the Floure and Leafe' of Chaucer to the present day. The pastoral writers of other countries," says he, "appear as if they had paid nature an occasional visit, and become acquainted with her general charms; but the British poets have wooed her in her most secret haunts. A spray could not tremble in the breeze, a leaf could not rustle to the ground, a fragrance could not exhale from the humble violet, nor a daisy unfold its crimson tints to the morning, but it has been noticed by these impassioned and delicate observers, and wrought into some beautiful morality."

FIELD FLOWERS.*

FLOWERS of the field, how meet ye seem
 Man's frailty to portray,
 Blooming so fair in morning's beam,
 Passing at eve away;
 Teach this, and oh ! though brief your reign,
 Sweet flowers, ye shall not live in vain.

Go, form a monitory wreath
 For youth's unthinking brow;
 Go, and to busy manhood breathe
 What most he fears to know;
 Go, strew the path where age doth tread,
 And tell him of the silent dead.

* The object which it has been the author's aim to accomplish in this work is to pursue such a train of reflection, or draw such a moral, from each flower that is introduced, as its appearance, habits, or properties might be supposed to suggest. The first piece, however, is intended as introductory, and the specimens which are illustrated in the plate are only to be considered as the representatives of field-flowers in general.

But whilst to thoughtless ones and gay
 Ye breathe these truths severe,
 To those who droop in pale decay
 Have ye no word of cheer?
 Oh yes, ye weave a double spell,
 And death and life betoken well.

Go, then, where, wrapt in fear and gloom
 Fond hearts and true are sighing,
 And deck with emblematic bloom
 The pillow of the dying;
 And softly speak, nor speak in vain,
 Of your long sleep and broken chain.

And say that He, who from the dust
 Recalls the slumbering flower,
 Will surely visit those who trust
 His mercy and His power;
 Will mark where sleeps their peaceful clay,
 And roll, ere long, the stone away.

THE SNOWDROP AND CROCUS.

“ Fair-handed, Spring unbosoms every grace,
 Throws o’er the snowdrop and the crocus first.”

THE SNOWDROP.

GALANTHUS NIVALIS.

‘ The frail snowdrop,
 Born of the breath of Winter, and on his brow
 Fix’d like a pale and solitary star.”

THIS flower, so simply elegant in itself, and so welcome
 as the earliest harbinger of brighter days, springing up,
 were, heedless of all obstacles,

“ While yet the trembling year is unconfirm’d,
 And winter oft at eve resumes the breeze,
 Chills the pale morn, and bids his driving fleet
 Deform the day delightless,”

wins its way to every heart; and, when blended with
 the varied tints of the lively crocus, which closely follows
 in its train, forms a beautiful and appropriate wreath
 for the infant spring.

THE CROCUS.

CROCUS VERNUS — AUREUS.

" Ere a leaf is on a bush,
 In the time before the thrush
 Has a thought about its nest,
 Thou wilt come with half a call,
 Spreading out thy glossy breast
 Like a careless prodigal;
 Telling tales about the sun
 When we 've little warmth or none."

THE spring crocus is common in many parts of Europe. In mild seasons it blossoms in February; and its cheerful tints, when contrasted with the yet dreary aspect of nature, make it a welcome visiter.

We find it noticed by Homer: —

" Thick new-born violets a soft carpet spread,
 And clustering lotus swell'd the rising bed,
 And sudden hyacinths the turf bestrew,
 And flowery crocus made the mountain glow."

Virgil speaks of it as a flower on which the bees delight to feed, and Milton so far honours it as to give it a place in Paradise: —

“ Underfoot, the violet,
 Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay,
 Broider'd the ground ; more colour'd than with stone
 Of costliest emblem.”

‘ Rock’d by the chilly blast,
 And ’mid the cold snow peeping,
 Why do ye deck the waste
 When other buds are sleeping?
 Did ye, as they,
 Awhile delay
 Till softer gales were sighing,
 Perchance no flower
 In summer bower
 With ye in charms were vying.’

‘ No fervid beam, ’t is true,
 Lady, our slumber breaketh,
 From our light cups the dew
 No sportive zephyr shaketh ;
 Heralds of spring,
 The wind’s rude wing

We cope with at her calling,
 And calmly eye
 Through darkling sky
 The snow-flake thickly falling.

‘ From “ lilies of the field ”
 Lady, thou ’rt taught to borrow
 Lessons which well may yield
 Assurance for the morrow ;
 And might we dare
 Their task to share,
 We ’d say, May duty find thee
 Prompt at her call,
 Whate’er befall,
 To act the part assign’d thee.’

THE ALMOND BLOSSOM.

AMYGDALUS COMMUNIS.

“Fleeting and falling,
Where is the bloom
Of yon fair almond tree?
It is sunk to the tomb.”

THIS beautiful ornament of our plantations and pleasure-grounds is a native of Syria, but now completely naturalised in the South of Europe, and will even perfect its fruit in the more favourable parts of our island. It is, however, as an ornamental tree that it is cultivated here; and its delicate flowers, varying in colour from the fine blush of the apple blossom to a snowy whiteness, and, moreover, opening so early in the year, fully entitle it to the estimation in which it is held. It is this haste to bloom, even before a leaf is visible, which has made the almond tree so frequently symbolical of Scripture truth; and its Hebrew name, derived from a root, signifying to watch or waken, is strikingly characteristic of this property. When the prophet

Jeremiah first received his commission from the Almighty to predict the judgments which should befall the Jews, he was shown "the rod of an almond tree," to express the speed with which the Lord would "hasten his word to perform it." The rods of the twelve tribes, as well as Aaron's, appear to have been made of this tree, as emblematical of the vigilance required in their duties; and in the highly figurative description of old age, contained in the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes, the haste with which it advances upon us is expressed by the phrase "the almond tree shall flourish;" and the showy whiteness of its blossoms, unfolding on bare boughs, may not inaptly represent the hoary head and defenceless state of declining years.

It seems, however, susceptible of further improvement: its delicate flowers are as evanescent as they are beautiful, one moment being in their glory, and the next scattered "the breeze best knows where." Sir William Jones has the following couplet, expressive of their short-lived beauty: —

•
 " The gale that o'er yon waving almond blows, •
 The verdant bank with silver blossoms strews.

Spenser thus alludes to their being the sport of every
air : —

“ Like to ¹almond-tree ymounted hye
On top ¹of green Selinis all alone,
With blossoms brave bedecked daintilie,
Whose tender locks do tremble everie one
At everie little breath that under heaven is blown.”

When garner'd is pale Autumn's sheaf,
And days are gloomy, chill, and brief,
Oh not with wonder, scarce with grief,
We pause to view
The fading flower and seared leaf
Our pathway strew.

But thus to see *thee* bow thy head,
And on the ground thy pale leaves shed,
Ere thy first hour of bloom is sped,
This wakes a sigh;
For visions of the early dead
Come floating by.

Oh were I from each bud that blows
To choose meet type for beauty's brows,
I'd turn from lily and from rose
To thee, sweet flower,
For that thy leaves in springing close,
Thy life's an hour.

Yes — whether singing to her lute,
Or listening love's beguiling suit,
Or when enlivening harp and flute
 Invite the dance;
Thou, frail one, eloquently mute,
 Should'st woo her glance.

For whilst upon her bosom white
Thy leaves so perishingly bright
Dropt one by one — perchance she might
 Read beauty's doom ;
And learn how e'en a breath may blight
 Youth's opening bloom.

THE DAFFODIL.

NARCISSUS PSEUDO-NARCISSUS.

“ Daffodils

That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty.”

INTIMATELY as Shakspeare was acquainted with the human heart, it was not the only book he studied; for whenever he borrows an illustration or metaphor from nature, it is generally with the accuracy of an attentive observer, in proof of which the motto just cited is an example.

The daffodil, which we hail among our earliest flowers, is a native of almost every country of Europe. With us, though more uncommon than the daisy, primrose, and other spring favourites, it grows very freely in many places, choosing for its habitat rather moist woods and thickets —

“ And daffodils in brooks delight.”

I know not whether this blossom^o be really more short-lived than its floral companions, but Herrick has addressed it under that view in lines of much pathos.

“ Fair daffodils, we weep to see
 You haste away so soon :
 As yet the early-rising sun
 Has not attain'd his noon :
 Stay, stay
 Until the hastening day
 Has run
 But to the even song,
 And, having pray'd together, we
 Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
 We have as short a spring,
 As quick a growth to meet decay
 As you, or any thing :
 We die
 As your hours do, and dry
 Away
 Like to the summer's rain,
 Or the pearls of morning dew,
 Ne'er to be found again.”

This is but a mournful greeting for these gentle but courageous harbingers of brighter days. Unless under the immediate pressure of sorrow, our first feeling

generally on beholding them is delight. They rather tend to inspire hope than awaken memory, whispering in a still small voice, "The winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

How knew ye when to waken? did sweet Spring
 Bend o'er ye, as a mother o'er her child,
 With kindling glance, till ye look'd up and smiled?
 Or did some frolic zephyr, on light wing,
 Visit your couch, and woo ye thus to fling
 Your early garlands on the lap of earth?
 Whate'er the gentle spell which lured ye forth,
 We reap the boon, and hail your blossoming.
 Oh! meekly bold, ye ever come to cheer
 Our hearts, and they are cheer'd; may storm nor blight,
 For this, ye nurslings of the opening year,
 Upon your silken petals e'er alight;
 For this, may sun and breeze, and dewdrop clear,
 Each minister in turn to your delight.

THE ROSEMARY AND VIOLET.

THE ROSEMARY.

ROSMARINUS OFFICINALIS.

“ There ’s rosemary, that ’s for remembrance.”

THE rosemary is not indigenous, but a native of the South of Europe; it will, however, brave our winters, if planted in a dry soil and favourable situation. Its common time of flowering is April, but in mild seasons it puts forth its blossoms in March, or even earlier. Henry Kirke White, in one of his most beautiful and plaintive productions, apostrophises it as loving “ to bloom on January’s front severe;” but this must be a rare circumstance, and rather the exception than the rule.

“ The generic name, *Rosmarinus*, is derived from the Latin *ros*, dew, and *marinus*, in allusion to its inhabiting the sea coast.” “ Those,” says a distinguished modern traveller, “ who have observed it mantling the rocks of the Mediterranean, with its grey flowers glit-

tering with dew, cannot but be struck with the elegant propriety of the name." But it is not confined to such situations, though it may prefer them; for Bacon speaks of heaths of rosemary, which, he says, "will smell a great way in the sea, perhaps twenty miles."

This statement is corroborated by later travellers, who mention its growing, along with lavender, in the Great Desert; which circumstance explains the following passage in the sweet ode above alluded to:—

"And throw across the *desert* gloom
A sweet decaying smell."

And also these lines, by a celebrated living author:—

——— "The humble rosemary,
Whose sweets so thanklessly are shed.
To scent the *desert* and the dead."

Several ancient authors have alluded to the rosemary. "From its smelling like incense, they termed it Libanotis; and Coronarius, on account of its being used in garlands." Among our own bards, Shakspeare, who immortalises every flower he names, under the supposition, which in his time generally prevailed, that it

“ comforted the brain and strengthened the memory,” besides the passage in Hamlet, cited above, makes Perdita say — .

— “ Reverend sirs,

For you there's rosemary, and rue ; these keep
Seeming, and savour, all the winter long :
Grace, and remembrance, be to you both ; ”

rue being the herb of grace, and rosemary of remembrance.

The qualities attributed to this plant in Shakspeare's day, may account for its being formerly used, with other favourite flowers, at funerals. These offerings to the dead are thus beautifully referred to in Cymbeline :—

“ Here's a few flowers ; but about midnight, more :
The herbs, that have on them cold dew o' the night
Are strewings fitt'st for graves
You were as flowers, now wither'd : even so
These herblets shall, which we upon you strew.”

——— “ With fairest flowers,

Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave : thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose ; nor
The azured harebell, like thy veins ; no, nor,

The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
 Out-sweeten'd not thy breath
 Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flowers are none,
 To winter-ground thy corse."

Evelyn, in his *Sylva*, alludes to this practice as a thing of ordinary occurrence in his day, subjoining this beautiful moral:—"We adorn their graves with flowers and redolent plants, just emblems of the life of man, which has been compared in Holy Scriptures to those fading beauties, whose roots, being buried in dishonour, rise again in glory."

It is only in remote villages that this significant custom still holds with us; for the poor seem to have a sort of practical sentimentalism about them, which makes them cling to those ancient rites, once alike common to the palace and the cottage.

In foreign lands, however, and in the East more especially, where manners and fashions are less liable to change, such rites are observed amongst all ranks. "The women in Egypt," says Maillet, "go at least two days in the week to pray and weep at the sepulchres of the dead; and the custom then is to throw upon the tombs a sort of herb which the Arabs call *rihan*, which is our sweet basil."

Hasselquist also mentions, with much commendation,

the care with which the Turks adorn their burial-places. He says, " They are handsome and agreeable, which is chiefly owing to the many fine plants growing in them, and which they carefully place over their dead. Cypressess (esteemed by them mourning trees) of remarkable height, and an innumerable quantity of rosemary, are mostly found here. The latter was in blossom, and afforded an aromatic and delicious odour."

THE VIOLET.

VIOLA ODORATA.

" Bring violet buds to shed

Around my dying bed

A breath of May, and of the woods' repose."

THIS universal favourite, in poetry the rival of the rose, is a common indigenous plant, growing not only in most parts of England, but in every country throughout Europe. It is said, also, by some travellers, to be common in the palm groves of Barbary, where the blue and white grow together, and blossom in the winter. It is found wild in Palestine, and has been seen to blend its simple beauty with the gorgeous flowers of China, near Canton.

Lord Bacon, in his chapter on gardens, has brought the violet into most honourable notice. "That which above all others yields the smell in the air," says he, "is the violet; especially the white double violet, which comes about the middle of April, and about Bartholomew tide." And who that ever inhaled its fragrancý, but agreed with Shakspeare that

"To throw perfume on the violet were wasteful?"

This bard has made frequent mention of our little flower. How touchingly does poor Ophelia say —

"I would give you violets, but they wither'd all when my father died!"

Again, he talks of

— "Violets dim

But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,

Or Cytherea's breath."

And again: —

—— "They are gentle

As zephyrs blowing below the violet,

Not wagging his sweet head."

But his happiest allusion to it is in that exquisite passage in the "Twelfth Night:" —

•

" That strain again ; it had a dying fall :
Oh ! it came o'er my ear like the sweet south,
That breathes upon a bed of violets,
Stealing and giving odour."

Neither does Milton forget it ; it is one of the favoured flowers with which he strews the bower of Adam and Eve in Paradise.

But much of the imagery of the poets turns on the blue colour of the violet ; and as the specimen here chosen is the white one, happily for one who fears being tedious, yet knows not what to reject where all are so beautiful, the field of quotation is narrowed.

The violet was considered an emblem of constancy ; probably from its blossoms being generally blue, which was esteemed an unchanging colour : —

" Violet is for faithfulness
Which in me shall abide,
Hoping likewise that from your heart
You will not let it slide."

I have ventured to extend this symbolical character to the white variety ; the flowers of which are larger

and more fragrant, and thus appropriated it to the dead ;
and surely its timid beauty and delicate odour render
it worthy of this mournful distinction :

Nay, take that gorgeous rose away,
And this bright flaunting wreath ;
'T would seem like mockery to array
With buds so joyous and so gay
The brow of death.

Yet would I that a flower or two
Were shedding fragrance here,
Funereal rosemary and rue —
These would not mock with dazzling hue
My silent tear.

And just one violet you may bring
To deck the sleeping dust ;
From winter's sleep awakening,
'T will whisper of that brighter spring
Which waits the just.

Come, then, sweet flowers, and, while the knell
Says, " Dust with dust must lie ;"
To check the agonised farewell,
Do ye of sweet re-union tell,
Beyond the sky.

THE DAISY.

BELLIS PERENNIS.

“ There is a flower, a little flower,
 With silver crest and golden eye,
 That welcomes every changing hour,
 And weathers every sky.

It smiles upon the lap of May,
 To sultry August spreads its charms,
 Lights pale October on his way,
 And twines December's arms.”

THE simple notice of the botanist, that the daisy grows “in pastures and meadows every where*,” is alone sufficient to establish its claim on our regard. It is not merely a spring or summer friend, dying with its favourite season; it demands no peculiarities of soil or situation, it meets us *every where*, and attends us through the year, for it is often seen blossoming in the midst of winter. Thus Wordsworth addresses it —

“ When soothed awhile by milder airs,
 Thee Winter in the garland wears

* Sir J. E. Smith.

That thinly shades his few grey hairs ;
 Spring cannot shun thee ;
 * Whole Summer fields are thine by right,
 And Autuma, melancholy wight, •
 Doth in thy crimson head delight,
 When rains are on thee.”

For this, not less than for its simple cheerful beauty,

“ It is indeed by many a claim
 The poet’s darling : ”

and truly, from Chaucer downward, all the tuneful race
 have given it “ honour due.”

It seems the peculiar delight of the earlier poets ;
 they comment on all its beauties and habits, and the
 profuseness with which it is showered around makes
 them consider it the grand favourite of nature.

Chaucer thus unequivocally declares his preference
 for our little favourite, which, by a happy transposition,
 he calls “ eye of the day ; ”

‘ Of all the floures in the mede
 Than love I most these floures white and rede,
 Such as men callen daisies in our toun.”

Ben Jonson further says—

“ Strew, strew the glad and smiling ground
 With every flower, yet not confound :
 The primrose drop, the spring’s own spouse,
 Bright dayes-eyes, and the lips-of-cows.”

And Drayton, in his description of the various flowers twined by attendant nymphs into a bridal wreath for the river Tame, tell us, that they strewed

“ The daisy over all these sundry sweets so thick
 As Nature doth herself, to imitate her right
 Who seems in that, her pearl, so greatly to delight
 That every plain therewith she powdereth.”

Milton leads us most willing captives to

“ Russet lawns and fallows grey
 Where the nibbling flocks do stray,
 Meadows trim with daisies pied,
 Shallow brooks, and rivers wide.”

But, amongst all its gifted admirers, perhaps not one has addressed it in sweeter strains than the bard who has almost made the “wee crimson-tipped flower” his own, by those exquisitely beautiful lines, so full of true pathos, which must be familiar to all lovers of poetry.

The French appellation for the daisy, *marguerite* (a

pearl), is beautifully characteristic of this little floral gem ; and, in the days when flowers were considered a sort of universal language, with happy allusion to its title, Marguerite of Scotland, the first queen of Louis the Eleventh, presented Marguerite Clotilde de Surville, in acknowledgment of her poetical skill, with a wreath of laurel, surmounted by a bouquet of daisies, (the leaves wrought in silver, the flowers in gold,) bearing this quaint inscription, “ Marguerite d'Ecosse à Marguerite (the pearl) d'Hélicon.”

But recollections connected with courts and courtiers add little to the interest which the daisy excites. “ When well-apparelled April on the heel of limping Winter treads,” we must go to our own sunny banks and braes, then so thickly strewn with its blossoms ; and, giving way to the reminiscences it awakens, live over again the happy days of childhood.

Art thou waken'd already and decking the green ?
 How transient and light has thy winter sleep been !
 But thou art not of them which shrink back in dismay,
 If the season be adverse, or darkling the day.

As the lark amongst birds when it chants its blithe
strain,

As the lamb when it sports 'mid the flocks of the plain,
Such art thou amongst flowers, the blithest of all,
On which sunbeams are shining, or dewdrops do fall. '

Give the rosebud to Beauty ; for Innocence fair
Let the lily a chaplet like snow-wreath prepare ;
But though beauty and innocence both meet in thee, '
Sweet Cheerfulness claims thee her emblem to be.

How joy'd I to greet thee in childhood's gay hours,
When I wandered light-hearted in search of spring
flowers !

Though the violet and primrose I own'd were more rare,
Yet the garland ne'er pleased me till thou didst bloom
there.

That season of brightness has fled long ago,
And Sorrow her finger has pass'd o'er my brow ;
Yet I never now meet thee in spring's balmy hour,
But thou seem'st for one moment those days to restore.

THE PRIMROSE.

PRIMULA *VULGARIS.

“ Mild offspring of a dark and sullen sire,
 Whose modest form, so delicately fine,
 Was nursed in whirling storms
 And cradled by the winds.

Thee, when young Spring first question'd Winter's sway,
 And dared the sturdy blusterer to the fight,
 Thee on this bank he threw
 To mark his victory.”

So many and so pleasing are the associations connected with early spring flowers, that even some, which but for these might be considered as homely specimens of nature's handywork, stand high in our favour, and seem to possess “ something than beauty dearer.” But the primrose is not only rich in associations, as the favourite of our infancy, the herald of advancing spring, but is gifted with such delicacy of form, colour, and fragrance, as make it almost independent of every other charm ; and we feel assured,

“ Long as there 's a sun to set,
 Primroses will have their glory.”

“ The botanic name, *primula*, is derived from *primus*, first, prime, or early ; and hence prime-rose, contracted into primrose : ” • and though, ‘ in fact, this flower is preceded by the snowdrop and crocus, yet, on the least encouragement from sun and wind, it blossoms very early, seeming anxious to appear amongst the first that “ tell us tales about the spring. ” Except the daisy, no flower, perhaps, more touchingly recalls the days of our childhood. There may be here and there one, perhaps, in this work-day world insensible to the witchery of such reminiscences, and to whom the poet’s descriptive lines may be applied without a libel : —

“ A primrose by a river’s brim,
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more ; ”

But most will be able to recollect the time when they

“ Robb’d every primrose-root they met,
And oft-times got the root to set ;
And joyful home each nose-gay bore,
And felt — as they will feel no more. ”

From the paleness of its hue, and its growing in groves and shady situations, it is generally in poetry invested with a mournful character.

Milton says, "Bring the rather primrose that forsaken dies;" and Shakspeare, in the "Winter's Tale,"

3 of

—— "Pale primroses

That die unmarried ere they can behold

Bright Phœbus in his strength."

Might I differ from such high authorities, its retiring beauty, and its love of "dingle and bushy dell," would rather lead me to consider it as a fit emblem of modesty and humility.

Fairest of all that's fair

In nature's works are ye, ye wilding flowers,
When thus, at Spring's first beck, ye blithely rear
Your shining heads, to herald her bright hours.

'But that your bloom is brief,
And here and there on some slight stem a thorn,
Half hid, perchance, beneath a shrivell'd leaf,
Tells unto what sad destiny ye're born;

I could have thought the doom
Which gave to ruin earth, to storms the sky,
And Man, God's last best work, unto the tomb,
Your primal beauty had unharm'd pass'd by.

But are ye loved the less
That for our sakes these earth-born traits ye wear?
Oh, no! the very blight which mars your grace,
And speaks your frailty, makes ye but more dear.

Nor this your only claim
On Man's regard: meekly from glade and bower*
Ye warn and counsel him, as 't were your aim
To win him back to Paradise once more.

Yes, each of ye in turn
Points some pure moral to the human heart;
One, bending 'neath the storm, to those who mourn
Lessons of meek endurance may impart;

Others, that breathe at eve
Sweet incense, urge to watchfulness and prayer;
And, with united voice, *all* bid us leave
The morrow to our common Father's care.

And thou, so fair and pale,
That lovest 'mid grass and shadowing leaves to hide
Thy modest charms; sweet Primrose, thee I hail,
Reprover meek of vanity and pride.

Alas that pride, which wrought
Man's woe in Paradise, should haunt him still,
No hatred inmate, but with every thought
Twined, closely twined, and prompting aye to ill.

Oh ! when within my breast
Such thoughts are stirring, do thou gently chide,
And timely whisper from thy leafy nest,
“ Shall Man be proud, to sin and death allied ? ”

THE SPEEDWELL.

VERONICA CHAMÆDRYS.

“ Blue thou art, intensely blue !
 Flower, whence came thy dazzling hue ? —
 When I open'd first my eye
 Upward glancing to the sky,
 Straightway from the firmament
 Was the sapphire brilliance sent.”

Few wild, or indeed cultivated, flowers are more beautiful than the Veronica Chamædryis. Its tint,

“ Bright as the brightening eye of smiling child,
 And bathed in blue transparency of heaven,”

together with its form, so light and elegant, might make it a fitting garland for a fairy; nor, perhaps, can spring, with all her variety of bloom, present a lovelier sight than

“ Banks with speedwell flowers gay.”

In the English Flora it is said “ to be by some mistaken for the *Myosotis palustris*, the German forget-me-not; it may, however, vie in beauty with the true one.”

Its leaves have been considered a good substitute for tea, especially in Germany and Sweden, and it has obtained from the French the name of *Thé de l'Europe*.

Though so beautiful, and so profusely scattered

“ In every lane and every alley green,
Dingle and bushy dell,
And every bosky bourn from side to side,”

I am not aware that it figures much in poetry; Spenser, however, is supposed to allude to it under the name *astrophel*, in compliment to Sir Philip Sidney.

The following interesting anecdote, connected with this flower, is recorded by Schimmelpenninck: —

Rousseau, in his earliest and happiest days, was enjoying, in company with a friend, the lovely scenery surrounding Geneva. As they were commenting on the various objects of attraction which gave a charm to the landscape, his companion pointed to a bed of the *Veronica Chamædrys*, remarking, that its cheerful beauty accorded well with the scene. At a later period of his life, the philosopher again visited Geneva, and again rambled to the very spot which had charmed him thirty years before. His name had now become the very watchword of literature and philosophy, “falsely so called,” but *faux* was all he had reaped—he was a

stranger to happiness. The prospect he was surveying was as lovely as ever, but he felt that he was changed, though nature was not; the world had deceived his youthful expectations, the past was a troubled dream, the future had nothing in store for him. Whilst thus musing, he cast his eye on the same tuft of speedwell, it was blooming as cheerily as before, but the friend who had first directed his attention to it was no more. It was too much for him—sick at heart, he turned away and wept.

Not for thy azure tint, though bright,
 Or form, so elegantly light,
 I single thee, thou lovely flower,
 From others of the sylvan bower;
 Thou hast a spell to them unknown,
 And this my heart hath captive won.

Thy name, what is't? The very prayer
 Affection breathes for friends most dear;
 Whate'er their pursuits, hopes, or aim,
 Part they or meet, thy magic name
 With silent eloquence may tell
 Her soul's fond breathings, "Speed ye well."

Then to thy task, thou favour'd flower ;
And, if thy simple charms have power
To win the glance of her I love, .
Oh faithful to thy errand prove ;
Say, far or near, where'er she dwell,
My prayer shall ever be, " Speed well."

THE CROWN-IMPERIAL.

FRITILLARIA IMPERIALIS.

“Pride of gardens, charming flowers

Fleeting are your little hours;

Often does a summer's day

Give ye life and take away:

Mornings two or three at most

Are the brilliant life ye boast.”

THE crown-imperial, as its name imports, wears a majestic appearance, and “is greatly esteemed,” says Gerard, “for the beautifying of our gardens and the bosoms of the beautiful.” But however the florists of the present day may be prepared to admit the former assertion, they certainly must reject the latter; for the size of its blossoms, and the strong disagreeable odour they emit, would ill suit the more refined taste of a modern belle. It is a native of Persia, the land of flowers, and its stately beauty does honour to its birth-place; yet is it so completely acclimatised here, that it is one of our earliest tall spring flowers, and forms a splendid decoration to the then comparatively vacant border.

But, though so handsome, it does not seem a favourite of the muse; for it is rarely mentioned by the poets. Ben Jonson, indeed, gives it a "slender help to fame," by placing it in a nosegay composed of almost every flower of the garden: —

*"Bring cornflag, tulip, and Adonis-flower;
Fair ox-eye, goldy-locks, and columbine,
Pinks, goulands, king-cups, and sweet sops-in-wine;
Blue harebells, paigles, pansies, calaminth,
Flower-gentle, and the fair-haired hyacinth:
Bring rich carnations, fleur-de-luces, lilies,
Bright crown-imperial," &c.*

The grass which clothes the meads to-day,
But withers with to-morrow's ray,
The rose aye coupled with the thorn,
The lily, by the rude blast torn,
Yet still so fragrant and so meek —
These to our common nature speak,
And utter truths of thrilling sound,
Where'er a human heart is found.

But thou, whose very name, proud flower,
 Reminds us of a monarch's dower;
 Yea, thou, so late the garden's gem,
 Now crush'd and broken from thy stem —
 A word of counsel and of fear
 Might'st breathe, methinks, for kingly ear;
 And thus, if rightly I divine,
 Thus wouldst thou speak, were language thine: —

“ This morn I sprang, with pride elate,
 To meet the Sun, who on his heavenly way,
 Strong as a giant, as a bridegroom gay,
 Went forth with royal state;
 Looking as if he fear'd no future cloud
 Should cross his track, or his bright splendour
 shroud.

“ And, as I gazed, I thought the while,
 That what *he* was to yon o'er-arching sky —
 A light, a glory — such to earth was *I*;
 And then, with scornful smile,
 I felt and call'd myself the garden's queen,
 And thought the Rose, compared with me, was
 mean.

“ And yet, 'mid all this stately show
 Inly I wept * ; for never yet was pride
 To peace and quiet happiness allied.

Ask him whose jewell'd brow
 Aches 'neath the weight of empire—he can tell
 How in that ‘ golden round ’ few pleasures dwell.

“ But to my tale : — Soon I became
 The storm's rude jest ; while many a meaner flower,
 Safe in its lowliness, still deck'd the bower,

A witness of my shame.
 Listen, ye mighty ones ; your very state
 E'en thus invites the storm which seals your fate.

“ Ah ! then, so live your little day,
 ‘ That He who wears the crown immortally,’
 When life, with all its pomp and pageantry,
 Melts like a dream away,
 May give ye, in his own bright world above,
 Kingdoms and crowns which cannot fade or move !”

* “ In the bottom of each of these bells there is placed sixe drops of most cleere shining sweete water, in taste like sugar, resembling in shewe faire orient pearles ; the which drops if you take away, there doe immediately appeere the like, as well in bignes as also in sweetness ; notwithstanding, if they be suffered to stande still in the flower, according to his own nature, they will never fall away ; no, if you strike the plant until it be broken.”

THE WILD WALL-FLOWER.

CHEIRANTHUS FRUTICULOSUS.

" Flower of the solitary place,
 Grey ruin's golden crown ;
 That lendest melancholy grace
 To haunts of old renown.
 Thou mantlest o'er the battlement
 By strife or storm decay'd ;
 And fillest up each envious rent
 Time's canker-tooth hath made."

THE wild wall-flower, though not distinguished by the richness and variety of tint peculiar to the garden species, which Thomson describes as "stained with iron brown," is yet by no means destitute of attractions, being of a bright yellow, and sweet-scented. It grows on old walls and ruins, hence its name; and, but for its unpretending aspect, fancy might deem it chose such situations in mockery of human grandeur. The minstrels and troubadours of old, however, gave a more charitable interpretation of its preference for scenes of dilapidation and decay, for they wore it when they would express an affection which neither time nor

misfortune could obliterate. This flower blossoms in April and May, and, from its choice of abode, it comes

“ With fascination to the heart address’d,”

and seems to pour forth a rich strain of morality to those who have an ear for the lessons of nature.

“ It is owing, perhaps, to the artificial combination of various materials that many vegetables grow on and around ruined fortifications and castles, among whose relics the botanist finds frequent objects of interest; the campanula nods on the battlement, and the wall-flower gives her odours to the breeze as it sighs around the lonely pile which had once echoed only to the voice of cheerfulness and revelry. The works of man are ever going to decay; those of nature are in perpetual renovation.”

“ The weed is green when grey the wall,
And blossoms rise where turrets fall.”

What various turns of chance and fate
This mouldering pile has known;
What rude magnificence and state
Within its halls were shown,
When “ crowds of knights” and ladies gay
“ In weeds of peace” kept holiday.

These walls, where now with softening grace

The ivy-wreath is flung,

With trophies once of war and chace

Were thick and proudly hung :

But helmet, spear, and horn are gone

T' augment the dust we tread upon.

Full oft this cell in weary thrall

Hath lonely captive held,

And these proud towers the whizzing ball

Like granite rock repell'd :

But ah ! they fall and crumble now,

Beneath a stronger, mightier foe.

Time, Time his withering hand hath laid

On battlement and tower,

And where rich banners were display'd,

Now only waves a flower ;

List, and 't will fitting comment read

On revel gay, and martial deed.

‘ Mute is the warden’s challenge, mute

The warrior’s hasty tread,

And tuneless is the lady’s lute,

For she is with the dead ;

And but a flower now mourns the doom

Of prostrate strength and faded bloom.

- ‘ Read, stranger, in this ruin’s fate
 An emblem true of life;
 Conflicting passions — love and hate,
 Joy, sorrow, fear, and strife, —
 Combine, alas ! in one dark plan
 To storm the “ citadel of man.”
- ‘ And should they fail, a foe is near
 Who ne’er defeat hath known ; —
 Time ever follows in the rear,
 He wills, — the work is done ;
 For where’s the beauty, strength, or pride,
 Have e’er his withering touch defied ?
- ‘ Wear’st thou to-day the wreath of fame ?
 Oh, heed it — heed it not ;
 A few brief years, thy place and name
 May be alike forgot,
 And but a lowly flow’ret wave
 Upon thy unremember’d grave.
- ‘ Here ends the semblance, — never more .
 This ruin’d pile shall rise,
 But Man a seraph blest shall soar,
 When what is mortal dies,
 If, while earth’s changing paths he trod,
 His heart and hopes were fix’d on God.’

THE HEARTSEASE, OR PANSY VIOLET.

VIOLA TRICOLOR.

And "Thou, so rich in gentle names appealing
 To hearts that own our nature's common lot;
 Thou, styled by sportive Fañey's better feeling,
 'A Thought' — the Heartsease."

BESIDES adorning our own meadows, this favourite little flower grows in many parts of Europe, and is also a native of Siberia and Japan. There are many varieties, the larger ones of which only are odorous. No flower was ever gifted with so many names; to enumerate them would be a somewhat tedious task, but surely the very multiplicity speaks the estimation in which it is held. Its more usual appellations are Heartsease and Pansy, the latter a corruption of the French *pensée*; as such, it forms part of Ophelia's mournful wreath

—— "There is pansies,
 That 's for thoughts."

The "pansy freaked with jet" is also one of the flowers which Milton culls for the bier of Lycidas:

“ Love in Idleness ” is another name it assumes, and under that title it is immortalised by Shakspeare in that exquisite passage in the “ *Midsummer Night’s Dream*,” familiar to every reader. Its being held sacred to St. Valentine may have obtained for it this distinction.

But though “ the pretie pawnee,” as Chaucer calls this flower, is dear to most, both on account of its beauty and “ gentle names,” it has been mournfully, nay, almost ungraciously, apostrophised by an anonymous writer, who, it is hoped, may, at “ no distant date,” recover the *heartsease*, the loss of which he thus so feelingly deplores : —

‘ I used to love thee, simple flower,
 To love thee dearly as a boy ;
 For thou didst seem, in childhood’s hour,
 The smiling type of childhood’s joy.

‘ But now thou only mock’st my grief
 By waking thoughts of pleasures fled ;
 Give me — give me the wither’d leaf
 That falls on Autumn’s bosom dead.

‘ For that ne’er tells of what has been,
 But warns me what I soon shall be ;
 It looks not back on pleasure’s scene,
 But points unto futurity.

‘ I love thee not, thou simple flower,
 For thou art gay and I am lone :
 Thy beauty died with childhood’s hour —
 The *heartsease* from my path has gone.”

This morn a fairy bower I pass’d,
 Where, shelter’d from the northern blast,
 Grew many a garden gem ;
 More lovely sure not Eden graced,
 Ere yet the primal curse had traced
 Ruin and blight on all, and placed
 Thorns on the rose’s stem.

But nearer viewed, methought the bloom,
 Ev’n of this group, partook the doom
 Which all things earthly share ;
 In one, the gayest of the gay,
 A hidden worm insidious lay,
 Whilst others, borne far, far away,
 Pined for their native air.

Onward I sped in musing mood,
 Till, near my path, now wild and rude,
 A flow’ret met my view ;

Unlike to those I'd left, it chose
 A lowly bed, "yet blithe as rose
 That in the king's own garden grows,"
 It sipp'd the morning dew.

I paused, the sky became o'ercast,
 And the chill rain fell thick and fast,—
 How fared that blossom now?
 With head on its slight stem inclined,
 Smiling it met both rain and wind,
 As if to teach me it design'd
 'Neath sorrow's storm to bow.

Its name I knew, and deem'd full well,
 From its low home in rugged dell
 It might this hint afford,
 That, whilst exotics only flower
 In cultured soil and shelter'd bower,
 Heartsease may be alike the dower
 Of peasant and of lord.

Yea, brows may ache which wear a crown,
 And palace walls give back the groan
 Of breaking hearts, I weep,

Whilst in the peasant's lowly nest,
 That, which fair Eden's shades once blest,
 Oft lingers still a cherish'd guest,
 Cheering life's varied scene.

Then let the storm beat o'er my head,
 If, while the rugged path I tread,
 That "ease of heart" be mine,
 Which, when the darkling cloud doth rise,
 Not with the passing sunbeam dies,
 But, all unchanged by frowning skies,
 Throughout the storm doth shine.

But where, since Eden is no more,
 Now brightest blooms this precious flower?
 For thither would I rove;
 Among thy shades, Gethsemane!
 On thy dark mount, O Calvary!
 There, there it woos, from plenary free,
 The hand of faith and love.

THE FORGET-ME-NOT.

MYOSOTIS PALUSTRIS.

“ This is affection’s tribute, friendship’s offering,
 Whose silent eloquence, more rich than words,
 Tells of the giver’s faith and truth in absence,
 And says, ‘ Forget me not.’ ”

“ THIS most elegant plant, the ‘ Forget-me-not,’ or emblem of affection among the Germans, is the most distinct and best-known example of its genus, though too long confounded with other common species.” The colour of its buds is a fine pink, which in the expanded flower changes to a lovely azure, somewhat paler and less transparent than that of the germander speedwell, and reminding us of the tint of the turquoise, or the soft “ peculiar blue” of an autumnal sky.

The story whence it is supposed to have derived its tender appellation is of German origin, and not without interest. “ Dans le temps ancien deux jeunes amans, à la veille de s’unir, se promenaient sur les bords du Danube. Une fleur d’un bleu céleste se balance sur les vagues, qui semblent prêtes à l’entraîner :

THE LILY OF THE VALLEY.

CONVALLARIA MAJALIS.

——— “ And ye, whose lowlier pride
In sweet seclusion seems to shrink from view,
You of the valley named, no longer hide
Your blossoms meet to twine the brow of chastest bride.”

IN expatiating on the charms of flowers, each one, as it passes under review, seems for the moment to monopolise to itself the various perfections of its different competitors; but, on a more discriminating survey, after comparing one with another, we find each has its own peculiar claim on our regard. Amongst those, however, which are distinguished for timid loveliness and delicate odour, it must be confessed

“ No flower amid the garden fairer grows
Than the sweet lily of the lowly vale.”

What so beautiful as these “ pearl-white bells,” peeping between the ample green leaves; and how strictly

accordant is its fine, faint perfume with its shrinking
nun-like beauty ! Altogether it seems

. “ Chaste as the icicle,
Which hangs on Dian’s temple.”

Who has not longed, on a warm spring day,

‘ When the sun
Shakes from his noon-day throne the scattering clouds,
To seek the bank where flowering elders crowd,
And, scatter’d wild, the lily of the vale
Its balmy essence breathes ? ”

There are twelve species of this beautiful genus, natives of Europe and North America: five of which, *C. verticillata*, *C. polygonatum*, *C. latifolia*, *C. multiflora*, and *C. majalis*, are indigenous to our island. Of the latter, the most beautiful of the tribe, Sir J. E. Smith states, “ there are varieties with double or with purple flowers, sometimes seen in gardens, but not of easy cultivation, and far less elegant than the wild kind, which is among the most favourite of our native flowers.”

I believe I have taken a poetical licence in choosing this lily as the one alluded to by our Saviour, when he said, “ Consider the lilies of the field how they grow.”

There is a note, in Hartwell Horne's "Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures," to this effect (vol. iii. p. 63.): — "In this passage (Matt. vi. 28.), Jesus Christ is commonly supposed to have referred to the white lily, or to the tulip; but neither of these grows wild in Palestine. It is natural to presume that, according to his usual custom, he called the attention of his hearers to some object at hand; and, as the fields of the Levant are overrun with the *Amaryllis lutea*, whose golden liliaceous flowers, in autumn, afford one of the most brilliant and gorgeous objects in nature, the expression of 'Solomon in all his glory not being arrayed like one of these,' is peculiarly appropriate." This, be it remembered, is but conjecture. Should I, however, be in error, I have, at least, the countenance of an elegant writer (not, perhaps, in choosing this *species* of lily), who, speaking of the moral which flowers may impart, says, —

"Nor can such touching illustrations fail,
When thus the Saviour preach'd, his text the lilies pale."

Thou, whose sad and darkling brow
Seems to tell of care and woe,

Dost thou pore upon the cloud
 Which futurity doth shroud,
 And thy trembling fancy fill
 With anticipated ill?
 Ask the lilies of the field
 For the lessons they can yield;
 Lo! they neither spin nor toil,
 Yet how cheerily they smile!
 In such beautiful array,
 Solomon, in by-gone day,
 Deck'd in Ophir's gold and gem,
 Could not equal one of them.
 Hark! to Fancy's listening ear
 Thus they whisper soft and clear —
 'Heaven-appointed teachers we,
 Mortal, thus would counsel thee:
 Gratefully enjoy to-day,
 If the sun vouchsafe his ray;
 If the darkling tempest lower,
 Meekly bend beneath the shower;
 But, oh! leave to-morrow's fare
 To thy Heavenly Father's care.
 Does each day upon its wing
 Its allotted burden bring?

Load it not besides with sorrow
Which belongeth to the morrow.
Strength is promised, strength is given,
When the heart by God is riven;
But foredate the hour of woe,
And alone thou bear'st the blow.
One thing only claims thy care;
Seek thou first, by faith and prayer,
That all-glorious world above —
Scene of righteousness and love —
And whate'er thou need'st below
He thou trustest will bestow.'

COMMON BROOM.

SPARTIUM SCOPARIUM.

“ The broom,
 Yellow and bright as bullion unalloy'd
 Her blossoms.”

ONE of the most beautiful accompaniments of woodland scenery is the common broom. This is admitted by the discriminating and almost fastidious Gilpin, who, in enumerating the flowers and shrubs which give effect to the foreground of sylvan landscape, mentions with honour the bright yellow tint of the broom. Nor is it only in its spring or summer livery that it claims admiration; the cheerful verdure of its branches in winter pleasantly relieves the dreary aspect of the scene around.

It also possesses many useful properties; it yields to the northern peasantry thatching and fuel, and it is capable of being manufactured into a coarse linen; besides which, in by-gone days, it afforded to the huntsman and the warrior staves for their spears and darts.

Evelyn speaks of the broom as growing to an incredible height in the western parts of France and in Cornwall, but we are better acquainted with it as a shrub of moderate size, forming the chief embellishment of waste broken ground, knolls and thickets. It has ever been a favourite with the rural muse ; Burns, Thomson, and Cowper, among others, have each "given in charge its name to the sweet lyre;" and in the songs of our earlier bards it has a very prominent station. "Broom," says the editor of Scottish songs, "flourishes frequently in old verse. It has been employed largely in lovers' bowers; and though its bloom and its fragrance have yielded to bicks and hawthorn, it seems still the most sweet and natural bower that lyric poetry celebrates. This very fair and beautiful shrub," he adds, "though still plentiful, is far less abundant than formerly. I remember it in immense fields, waving nearly as far as the eye could reach, green, and long, and blooming; and in a windy day all the land near it was showered thickly over with its yellow flowers."

The broom, however, is not connected merely with pastoral images, but with historical associations of no common interest. Géfroi, Duke of Anjou, father of Henry the Second, chose it for his badge, and frequently wore a sprig of it in his cap; and from this circumstance,

its name (formerly *Planta Genista*) became the distinctive appellation of the princely house of Plantagenet.

‘ Time was when other haunts were thine
 Than tangled brake and breezy hill,
 When other sounds ’t was thine to hear
 Than yonder tinkling rill.

Time was when thou wert cull’d to deck
 With thy bright wreaths the brow of Power ;
 When princes chose thee for their crest,
 And bore thy name, sweet flower.

They wore thee in the battle-field
 Where crowns and realms were lost and won,
 They wore thee in the festive hall
 When war’s wild work was done.

In tilt and tournament they wreathed
 Thy blossoms with their waving plume,
 And beauty’s eye was fain to rest
 Upon thy favoured bloom.

Then speak to me of by-gone days,
 And tell me, for thou sure canst tell,
 If peace forsake the peasant's cot
 In regal hall to dwell.'

' Ah, lady, deem not so — grim care
 Too oft a monarch's path attends,
 And sentinels his palace gate,
 And o'er his pillow bends.

For me, far rather would I deck
 The milkmaid's than the chieftain's brow;
 And blossom on this verdant knoll,
 Than in trim gardens grow.'

THE DAME'S VIOLET.

HESPERIS MATRONALIS.

“ Call it not wasted, the scent we lend
 To the breeze, when no step is nigh ;
 O thus for ever the earth should send
 Her grateful breath on high.”

“ THIS flower is rather large and handsome, pale, purple, or white, perpetually varying from seed in this respect. By day they have little or no smell, except in rainy weather ; but in an evening they are highly and delightfully fragrant. Few British plants have been enveloped in more uncertainty than this, owing to the epithet *inodora*, which, as botanists generally hunt by daylight, was found inapplicable to our wild *hesperis* ; while the well-known rich nocturnal fragrance of the garden plant, dedicated in its name, for that very reason, to the evening star, was supposed to render the latter specifically distinct.” “ It is said that *Hesperis matronalis*, originally brought by European settlers to the United States of America, loses its scent the second season, and is obliged to be renewed by fresh seeds from Europe.” — *Sir J. E. Smith.*

“ This plant is much cultivated in gardens for the perfume of its flowers, which induces the ladies in Germany to keep it also in pots in their apartments ; whence it obtained the name of Dame’s violet.”

These fragrant greetings, from evening-scented flowers, no less delightful than unexpected, cannot fail to arrest the attention of the passer-by, and awaken many pleasant, and sometimes admonitory, imaginings. At such times we can enter into the spirit of those sweet lines in “ Paradise Lost,” applying them to *evening* instead of *morning* flowers, and fancy, with the author, that in this manner “ creatures wanting voice” do yield

“ Their *evening* incense, when all things that breathe
From the earth’s great altar send up silent praise
To the Creator.”

Nor can we forget the injunction, so beautifully urged in Thomson’s hymn : —

“ Soft roll your incense, herbs, and fruits, and flowers,
In mingled clouds to Him whose sun exalts, •
Whose breath perfumes you, and whose pencil paints.”

Yes, 't is sweet Evening's hour !

I know each signal well —

The dying strains in brake and bower,

The freshening breeze, the closing flower,

These all her coming tell.

Yea, now she flings

From her soft wings

A shade as sweet and sad as round past pleasure clings.

And thou, oh flow'ret fair !

That aye, at set of sun,

Dost yield those sweets withheld from day,

Art greeting now yon star's pure ray

With fragrant orison ;

And fancy deems

The dew that gleams

Upon thy breast is more than at the first it seems.

Would that with incense meet

I hail'd, like thee, fair flower,

“ The time of evening sacrifice,”

And spent in commerce with the skies

The calm, the silent hour.

How fit a shrine

For rites divine,

And the heart's holiest gifts, oh, gentle Eve, is thine !

All nature hath one voice,
One theme, and that how blest !
From stars of heaven high notes that swell,
To flowers that ope in lonely dell
Their incense-breathing breast ;
All, all upraise
One burst of praise,
And call aloud on man to join his loftier lays.

THE DOG-ROSE.

ROSA CANINA.

————— “ Impervious grows the briar
 Cover'd with thorns and roses, mingled like
 Pleasures and pains, but shedding richly forth
 Its fragrance on the air.”

If the lily of the valley conveys the idea of cloistered purity, the wild rose may as fitly represent that which escapes unsullied from the trying contact of everyday life.

Its blossoms open in June, and through this and the following month it “ bears its blushing honours thick upon it,” and is as truly the acknowledged and prime favourite of our hedgerows and thickets, as the cultivated species are of the gay parterre. When beholding the first rose of the season, who but recalls the time when he bore off the prize with no ordinary pleasure, esteeming it the choicest flower of his simple nosegay. It is indeed full of early associations; and, could we “ speak in numbers,” this seems the very language in which we should address it in riper years: —

" Yes! gazing on thee now,
 Those scenes beloved can memory draw
 When simple childhood's hat of straw
 Shaded my careless brow . . .
 And round it cluster'd many a wreath
 Of blossoms wild and sweet as thou,
 And lighter was the heart beneath
 Than it is now."

In the days when flowers were given as marks of distinction on various occasions, a single rose was awarded by Clemens the Isaurian, who instituted the floral games, as the prize of eloquence.

Some authors imagine that it was from this shrub the crown of thorns was made*; be that as it may, the thoughtful wanderer, whilst viewing its beauty and inhaling its fragrance, will not forget that

" Many a moral hangs upon its thorn ;"

* The Latin monks aver that the crown of thorns was made of *Ly-cium spinosum* (Boxthorn); others give this mournful distinction to *Rhamnus spina Christi* (Buckthorn), thence called Christ's thorn. But Hasselquist, who very happily illustrates Scripture by his observations, thinks that the Naba, or Nabka, of the Arabians is the tree which furnished this crown, offering as a reason for his conjecture, that " this plant has many small and sharp spines, well adapted to give pain; and, as the leaves much resemble those of ivy, perhaps the enemies of Christ chose a plant similar to that with which emperors and generals were wont to be crowned, that there might be calumny even in the punishment."

and he will find other feelings than those of admiration insensibly mingle with his contemplations. It does, indeed, read a fitting comment on earthly pleasures. We have still on earth "flowers of all hue," but we cannot add,

· And without thorn the rose."

Gem of the bower, sweet Rose ! the fairest, brightest
 Of the gay tribes which drink the summer beam,
 Unchanged thou seem'st, and still my eye delightest,
 When other joys are passing as a dream.
 Oh ! with each breath that fills the zephyr's wing,
 How much of early feeling seems to spring !

Nor do I feel, when in my breast I wear thee,
 Thy scent and beauty form thy only spell ;
 To sober thought thy very thorns endear thee,
 For wholesome are the solemn truths they tell ;
 Traits of the fall, they seem, sweet flower, to thee,
 What care and grief are to humanity.

Come then, fair monitress, and let me borrow

Hints which may serve for life's aye-changing hour.

Is grief my lot? tell how unmix'd His sorrow,

Who laid aside for us his crown, and wore,

Not, as doth man, alternate thorn and rose,

But thorns, thorns only, on His bleeding brows.

And if, when pleasures smile, thou e'er shouldst find me

With trusting fondness cling too much to them,

Then, gentle teacher, once again remind me,

By the sharp thorns which fence thy graceful stem,

That heaven alone unchanging pleasure knows,

Skies without cloud, "and without thorn the rose."

YOUTH'S EMBLEMS.

“ Of nature’s gifts thou may’st with lilies boast
And with the half-blown rose.”

THOU of light heart and footstep free,
Of open brow and eye of glee,
What emblems shall I choose for thee
From nature’s store?

Whate’er is bright, whate’er is sweet,
Yet fugitive, withal, and fleet,
These, these, alas ! are emblems meet,
Gay Youth, of thee.

What better than the budding flower,
Ere it has felt the north-wind’s power,
Or learnt that sunny skies may lower,
Thy bloom may show?

What than the light in eastern skies,
When the glad sun prepares to rise,
And dew that on the rose-leaf lies,
Thy smiles and tears?

What than the many-tinted bow
Which on the deepening cloud doth glow,
Like vision fair, may better show
Thy hopes and joys?

The flow'ret's leaves our path shall strew,
The dawning brightness mock our view,
And heavier drops than morning dew
Weigh down the rose.

And thus thy bloom, thy smiles must fade,
Thus die each hope of fancy bred,
And sorrow bow thy weary head,
Like storms the rose.

Yet weep not — for there is a sphere
Where joy ne'er turns into a tear,
Unchanging bliss alone is there —
Oh, be it thine !

THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL.

ANAGALLIS ARVENSIS.

“ Of humbler growth, though brighter dyes,
 But not by rural swains less prized,
 The trailing stems allure
 Of Pimpernel, whose brilliant flower
 Closes against the approaching shower,
 Warning the swain to sheltering bower,
 From humid air secure.”

“ THE name of this plant, *Anagallis*, retained from the old Greek and Roman authors, is probably from the verb *αναγελαω*, to smile; from the conspicuous beauty of its flowers:” and truly does it merit any title indicative of simple yet brilliant beauty, for none of our wild flowers can exceed it in loveliness.

The *Anagallis* closes its petals “ at the approach of rain, as farmers and shepherds in general very well know:” which propensity has obtained it a place in Dr. Jenner’s long and well-known catalogue of “ signs of rain:” —

“ Closed is the pink-eyed pimpernel.”

Plants of this description are called by Linnæus *meteoric* flowers, as being regulated by atmospheric causes. This susceptibility is by no means peculiar to the *Anagallis*; but it is, perhaps, the most familiar example of it. Probably its blooming during those months when the state of the atmosphere is of the most consequence to agricultural pursuits, may make it more consulted by the peasant, and have thus obtained for it the name of “the poor man’s weatherglass.”

The *Anagallis cærulea*, which almost vies with the *arvensis* in beauty, has been found in the neighbourhood of Smyrna. It seems at present a disputed point among botanists whether it shall be considered a species or a variety.

This flower is very rarely found of a brilliant white.

Up and abroad—the earth puts on
 Her beautiful array,
 The heavens their glory, for the sun
 Rejoiceth on his way.
 Not vainly shall he shed his ray :
 Yon mountain’s height I’ll brave,
 Or trim my skiff so light and gay,
 And wake the slumbering wave:

Hark ! how the fresh breeze bears along
To heaven wide nature's matin song.

But what is here ? The pimpernel
Drooping with close-shut eye —
True sign, so village sages tell,
Of storm and tempest nigh —
But sure such bright and glorious sky
Shall know no cloud to-day,
O then thy darkling prophecy
Give to the winds away,
And own, whilst thou yon heavens dost view,
For once thou hast not read them true.

Despite my taunt, the prescient flower
Still closed its petals bright,
And soon the storm, with voice of power,
Show'd its forebodings right.
'Tis ever thus — some sudden blight,
When most we dream of joy,
Does on the shining prospect light
To mar it and destroy.
Oh ! when like this poor flower shall I
Discern aright life's changing sky ?

THE EVENING PRIMROSE.

CENOTHERA BIENNIS.

" Flower of eve, I love to view thee,
 While thy dewy petals spread,
 Tearfully my looks pursue thee,
 As thou rear'st thy golden head.
 Sleep may rest on other eyes,
 Ours shall commune with the skies."

THIS genus contains more than thirty species, mostly natives of America or the Cape of Good Hope. They are generally hardy herbaceous plants, and expand their delicately fragrant flowers in the evening. The *Cenothera biennis* "is common in gardens, and often escapes from thence into rich waste ground. But on the dreary sands of our Lancashire coast it is truly wild, being planted there by the hand of nature, though perhaps transported, by natural means, from the other side of the Atlantic. It has been found in the greatest abundance between the first and second ranges of sand-banks on the coast of Lancashire, a few miles north of Liverpool. It also covers several acres of ground near

Woodbridge, Suffolk, and is seen on the banks of the Arrow, Warwickshire."

‘ The sun his latest ray has shed,
 The wild-bird to its nest has sped,
 And buds which to the day-beam spread
 Their brightest glow,
 Incline their dew-besprinkled head
 In slumber now.

‘ Then why art thou lone vigils keeping,
 Pale flower, when all beside are sleeping ?
 Are not the same soft zephyrs sweeping
 Each slender stem,
 And the same opiate dew-drops steeping
 Both thee and them ?’

‘ Eve is my noon — at this still hour
 When softly sleeps each sister flower,
 Sole watcher of the dusky bower
 I joy to be,
 And conscious feel the pale Moon shower
 Her light on me.

‘ Soon as meek Evening veils the sky,
 And wildly fresh her breeze flits by,
 And on my breast the dew-drops lie,

I feel to live,

And what is mine of fragrancy

I freely give.

‘ Say, thou who thus dost question me,
 Wouldst thou from earth’s dull cares be free,
 O listen, and I’ll counsel thee

Wisely to shun

Tumult and glare and vanity,

As I have done.

“ Enter thy closet, shut the door,”

And heavenward let thy spirit soar,

Then softer dews than bathe the flower

On thee shall rest,

And beams which sun nor moon can pour

Illume thy breast.’

THE WOODY NIGHTSHADE, OR BITTER SWEET.

SOLANUM DULCAMARA.

“ Oh ! star-eyed Science, hast thou wander'd there
To waft us home the message of despair ?
Ah me ! the laurell'd wreath that Murder rears,
Blood-nursed, and water'd by the widow's tears,
Seems not so foul, so tainted, and so dread
As waves the nightshade round the sceptic's head.”

WERE it allowable for man to desire any thing in nature to be otherwise than it is, one might wish this poisonous plant were clothed in a garb less attractive, and more indicative of its deleterious qualities ; as the beauty of its blossoms and fruit, known to the peasantry by the name of poison-berries, often proves fatally tempting to children. But, though this is the character of our solanum, there are species of the same genus, the fruit of which may be eaten with impunity. That of the nightshade of Egypt (*Solanum sanctum*), for instance, is in great request for this purpose by the natives.

Other species mentioned by travellers are *Solanum melongena*, and *Solanum incanum*. The fruit of the former is the famous *Poma Sodomitica*, found growing in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea, which is large and handsome; but, the rind being frequently punctured by a species of insect, the fruit gangrenes, and is changed into a substance like ashes, while the outside, still uninjured, presents the most attractive appearance. The latter species (*Solanum incanum*) is thought to be the plant to which Isaiah alludes in the fourth verse of the fifth chapter of his prophecy. It is common in Egypt and Palestine; and the Arabian name, answering to wolf-grapes, agrees well with the description. It resembles a vine by its shrubby stalk, and greatly infests the vineyards; and, being very injurious to the plants, the cultivators root it out with great care.

“ There is no smell in the *Dulcamara* when dried; but that of the recent plant is heavy and disagreeable. The stalks, whether fresh or dried, have a slightly bitter taste, followed by a remarkable sweetness, somewhat resembling liquorice: a peculiarity which, no doubt, suggested the name of *Glycypieros*, and *Dulcamara*, of which the English trivial name Bitter-sweet is a just translation.”

Away, away with thy tempting bloom —
 Go seek thee a fitting bower —
 In the churchyard drear by the haunted tomb,
 Or the falling shrine, make thy cheerless home,
 Thou fair but treacherous flower :
 Or where mandrakes * grow by the wizard's cave,
 And the adder lurks, let thy garlands wave.

* In the dark ages, when ignorance and superstition, "fancy sick," shaped out of the commonest objects of nature "Gorgons and Hydras, and Chimæras dire," the mandrake held the foremost rank amongst those "plants of power" which were imagined to possess a mysterious influence over the destiny of man. To the singular form of its taper root (which, in some plants, descends six or even eight feet underground, and is supposed to bear some resemblance to the human figure) it owes both its name and its supposed magical properties, which happily were all of a beneficial tendency. "One of the two species," Calmet says, "emits a pleasant odour, of so powerful an effect as to revive the sinking spirits of the dying, affording time for the application of other restoratives." It is somewhat difficult to reconcile this invigorating quality with the somniferous effects attributed to it by Shakspeare in the following lines : —

———— "Not poppy, nor mandragora,
 Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
 Shall ever med'tine thee to that sweet sleep
 Which thou ow'st yesterday."

But, notwithstanding the good effects ascribed to it, the mandrake is generally found in bad company; being associated by our poets with those plants which Virgil designates "fellest of the weedy race." Amongst such it is classed by Harte, in his description of the flowers which grow near the Palace of Death : —

* Nor were the nightshades wanting, nor the power
 Of thorn'd stramonium, nor the sickly flower
 Of cloying mandrakes, the deceitful root
 Of the monk's fraudulent cowl, and Plinian fruit "

For alas ! alas ! there 's a deadly spell
 Conceal'd thy leaves among,
 And 't is meet thou shouldst leave bright mead and dell,
 Where duly at eve the wild birds swell
 To more innocent flowers their song ;
 Be the raven's croak from the blasted tree,
 And the owlet's scream thy lullaby.

Yet, ere thou depart, let thy graceful wreath
 For one moment be lightly flung
 Round the mirror of Beauty, to show her beneath
 What is lovely and bright lurk the seeds of death
 And, despite bland Flattery's tongue,
 She might learn this lesson for after-hour,
 That beauty alone is a worthless dower.

The procuring this plant was considered a most hazardous undertaking ; for, on being dislodged from its bed, it was said to utter shrieks and groans, and whoever was within hearing died, or became mad. Shakspeare alludes to this notion in " Romeo and Juliet : " —

" Torn out of the earth,
 That living mortals, hearing them, run mad."

And in " Henry the Sixth : " —

" Would curses kill, as doth the mandrake's groan,
 I would invent as bitter searching terms,
 As curst, as harsh, as horrible to hear."

" The reported mode of uprooting it," says Drummond, " was to fasten the tail of a dog by cords to the bottom of the stem, and then the animal was whipped, until by his struggles the plant was dragged from the earth, while the persons who directed this operation had their ears filled with pitch, lest they should hear the fatal groan. The dog, *of course*, fell dead at the same time, or soon after."

Oh ! teach her but this, then away, away

Where the wine flows free and bright —
And, instead of the vine and the ivy spray,
Amid laughter, and dance, and festive lay,

Oh ! twine, in the reveller's sight,
Round the foaming bowl thy poisonous wreath,
To show him its draught is link'd with death.

Once more, and thy task is done — yea, go

To thy last and fittest shrine ;
Alas ! that there should be a human brow,
Where aught so baneful and false as thou

May, without polluting, shine !
The sceptic — I tremble to breathe his name —
Thine be the garlands which crown his fame.

THE ROSE.

ROSA.

' Sweet Rose, in air whose odours wave
 ' And colour charms the eye,
 Thy root is ever in the grave,
 And thou, alas! must die."

So many are the classical legends and poetical associations connected with the rose, that they crowd almost too thickly on the memory, baffling it by their very profusion. By common consent, in every clime and every age, the rose has been held the queen of flowers. It has been the poet's theme from time immemorial, and vain would be the attempt to transcribe even the hundredth part of the beautiful things which have been said or sung of it. Generally speaking, its eulogists, in our country at least, have anticipated its appearance, and bestowed it, with other tokens of lavish regard, on

their favourite May.* Thus Thomson, in his Invocation to Spring, says,

‘ Veil’d in a shower
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend !’

And Spenser speaks of

“ The roses reigning in the pride of May.”

Milton, however, designates it rightly, when in his pathetic lament on his blindness, he says,

- “ Thus with the year
Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or *summer’s* rose.”

Drummond also, the sweet poet of Hawthornden, has the following lines on a rose plucked from its stem : —

“ Look as the flower which lingeringly doth fade,
The morning’s darling late, the *summer’s* queen .
Spoil’d of that juice which kept it fresh and green,
As high as it did raise, bows low its head.”

* The ancient painters also hailed it with similar favour, and gifted it in like manner ; for, in their personifications of this month, they have represented it by a lovely-countenanced youth, clad in a green and white robe, embroidered with flowers, and crowned with a garland of white and damask roses.

And it is in summer, when the garden is in its glory, and not a blossom seems wanting, that the rose, “at length apparent queen,” comes forth as if to receive the homage of all other flowers, not haughtily, but with most winning grace, as if “afraid to claim her full authority.”

Its fragrance, too, is equal to its beauty; that of other flowers may be more spicy, more luscious, more powerful, but the fragrance of the rose is unique.

For the benefit of those who wish to be acquainted with the classical legends relating to this elegant flower, as well as with its various species and natural history, I give the following extracts from “Medical Botany:”—

“The ancients tell us that roses were originally white, but were changed to red by the blood of Venus, when her feet were lacerated by their prickles in her attempt to protect Adonis from the rage of Mars. Another fable states that Cupid overthrew a bowl of nectar, which, falling to earth, stained the rose.

“The rose was given by Cupid as a bribe to Harpocrates, the god of silence; from whence, we should suppose, originated the custom which, according to Rosenbergius, prevailed among the northern nations of Europe, of suspending a rose from the ceiling over the upper end of their tables, when it was intended that the conversation which took place should be secret:

and it is this custom that undoubtedly gave rise to the common expression ‘ Under the rose.’

“ A golden rose was considered so honourable a present, that none but crowned heads were thought worthy either to give or to receive it. Roses of this kind were sometimes consecrated by the Popes on Good Friday, and given to such potentates as they most wished to propitiate. The flower itself they considered an emblem of the mortality of the body, and the metal of which it was composed of the immortality of the soul. Boethius says that William, King of Scotland, received a present of this sort from Pope Alexander the Third, and Henry the Eighth a similar gift from Alexander the Sixth. The seal of Luther, which is a rose, is supposed to be symbolical of the same things as those golden presents were.

“ Roses were also employed by the Roman emperors as a means of conferring honours upon their most famous generals, whom they allowed to add a rose to the ornaments of their shields, a custom which continued long after the Roman empire had passed away, and the vestiges of which may yet be traced in the armorial bearings of many of the ancient noble families of Europe.” Let it not here be forgotten that it is the national badge of England.

“ As objects of cultivation, roses have always been eagerly sought after ; and, for the purpose of increasing their beauty, every means have been adopted that are likely to make them double. Hence we account for the multitude of individuals with which every garden abounds, whose beauty is only equalled by the extreme difficulty of tracing them to their original stock. And we may go back to the days of Herodotus, Athenæus, and Theophrastus, each of whom adverts particularly to, double roses; while Pliny enumerates several sorts, amongst which is the *R. centifolia*.

“ The species are all included between the 70th and 20th degrees of northern latitude, except the *R. Montezumæ* of Mexico, found in 19° N., at an elevation of more than 9300 feet above the level of the sea. But Baron Humboldt has calculated that in tropical countries the decrement of caloric is one degree over 90 toises of vertical elevation; therefore the heat at this height would be nearly the same as that of countries 29° farther from the equator; so that its situation is essentially the same as that of the European parallel, to the species of which it is more readily related than to those of its own continent. In Asia, which may indeed be called the “ land of the rose,” half the species have been found. Of the thirty-nine

it produces, eighteen are natives of the Russian dominions and the adjacent countries. Most of them are similar to the European portion of the genus, and five are common to Europe and Asia. Of the remainder, one, which is perhaps a distinct genus, has been discovered in Persia, fifteen in China, and two of the latter, with four others, in the North of India; one of which has considerable affinity to the *R. moschata* of Northern Africa. The Chinese and Indian species have a habit entirely different from the rest. With the roses of the Crimea we are entirely unacquainted; and yet they are said to grow there in the most astonishing profusion. Europe has twenty-five species, of which 5-6ths exist between 40° and 50°. Britain, according to Smith, has twenty-two species; Denmark, seven; Holland, thirteen; whilst in Spain, Portugal, and the Levant only four species have been observed. In the North of Africa are two species, peculiar to that country, and two others common to it and Europe. Fourteen species have been found in North America; only two of which, *R. Montezumæ* and *stricta*, bear much general resemblance to European roses. The *R. lævigata* of the woods of Georgia is so similar to the *R. sinica* of China, as not to be immediately distinguished from it; and the latter is even sold in some of the London nurseries under the name of *R. cherokeensis*."

To the true lovers of the rose,— and who is not? — no apology will be needed for the insertion of this somewhat long, but most interesting, quotation. What remains to be said, however, must be briefly noticed. Many species of the rose retain their scent long after death. On this peculiarity the poet thus comments:—

“ And first of all, the rose; because its breath
Is rich beyond the rest; and when it dies,
It doth bequeath a charm to sweeten death.”

And Shakspeare, perhaps in reference to the exquisite perfume extracted from its blossoms, thus eulogises it:—

“ The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye
As the perfumed tincture of the roses,
Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly,
When summer's breath their masked buds discloses.
But, for their virtue only is their show.
They live unmoved, and unrespected fade:
Die to themselves; sweet roses do not so;
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made.”

It is this delightful quality in the rose which has given rise to the following lines:—

Go, bloom of youth—I will not sigh
 As fleets thy evanescent dye;
 Bright glances, airy steps, farewell!
 Of mirth and vigour though ye tell;
 I will not mourn as I survey
 Each after each in turn decay.
 Take, take, O Time, destroying power!
 These relics of the youthful hour,
 And, or in mockery or play,
 Weave 'midst my locks thy tresses grey;
 Pass thy rude finger o'er my brow,
 And round my foot thy fetters throw,
 But lightly lay thy spells unkind
 Upon the treasures of the mind,
 Nor seal those sacred founts where lie
 The springs of sensibility.
 May thought still soar, may fancy play,
 Freely as in life's earlier day;
 May fond affection still possess
 The heart to feel, the hand to bless;
 To woe be pity's tear still given,
 As to parch'd flower the dew of heaven.
 But chiefly, as I see and feel
 Life's deepening shadows o'er me steal,

May faith, and hope, and holy love,
Shine every other grace above,
As night's pure gems are best display'd,
The darker grows the gathering shade.
This were to fade as doth the rose,
When the chill north-wind o'er it blows;
Its early brightness may decay,
Its leaves fall one by one away,
Yet, yet, despite both wind and rain,
Its fragrance doth unharm'd remain,
As if to point this moral home —
Man's nobler part survives his bloom.

THE WHITE ROSE.

ROSA ALBA.

" A single rose is shedding there
 Its lonely lustre, meek and pale :
 It looks as planted by Despair —
 So white — so faint — the slightest gale
 Might whirl the leaves on high ;
 And yet, though storms and blight assail,
 And hands more rude than wintry sky
 May wring it from the stem — in vain —
 To-morrow sees it bloom again ! "

THERE is something peculiarly attractive in white flowers; they seem to embody the very idea of purity and innocence. Among them the rose is pre-eminent in loveliness, and whilst gazing on its opening blossoms

 ' of purest virgin-white,
 Low-bent and blushing inward,"

one feels disposed to give it the meed of beauty before all other flowers, and to address it with the lavish praise

that Ferdinand bestows on Miranda, altering a word to suit the occasion : —

“ But you, oh you,
So perfect and so peerless, are created
Of every blossom's best.”

I know not whether the white rose may lay claim to an equal share of classical and poetical association with its blushing sister ; its supposed origin, however, is at least as fanciful, as it was said by the ancients to spring from the tears of Venus on the death of Adonis. It also shares another unenvied distinction ; that of being the chosen badge of the Yorkists, as the red rose was of the Lancastrians, in the civil wars between the two houses. This circumstance was made the subject of prediction by Gray's bard : —

“ Above, below, the rose of snow
Twined with her blushing foe, we spread.”

In “ Henry the Sixth,” Shakspeare gives us a long and somewhat tedious account of the choosing of the floral devices by the opposing parties. We could have wished some more appropriate badge had been selected, as it is an effort, and a painful one, to associate the idea of

jarring interest and civil broil with a thing so meekly beautiful as the rose, especially “this pale and maiden blossom here.” There are several allusions in the same play to the rival flowers. The king, in his piteous lament at the sight of a father bearing from the battle-field the son whom he had unwittingly killed, exclaims:—

“ O pity, pity, gentle Heaven, pity ! —
The red rose and the white are on his face,
The fatal colours of our striving houses.”

And thus, again, in “Richard the Third,” after the battle of Bosworth, Richmond, alluding to his anticipated marriage with the heiress of the house of York, says,

“ We will unite the white rose with the red :
Smile Heaven upon this fair conjunction
That long hath frown'd upon their enmity.”

Hay Drummond presented the following elegant impromptu with a white rose to a lady of the Lancastrian party:—

“ If this pale rose offend thy sight,
It in thy bosom wear,
'Twill blush to find itself less white,
And grow Lancastrian there.”

The white rose is extremely fragrant. In Fajhum, a province of Upper Egypt, there is a peculiar species, bearing a very large double flower, in colour rather inclining to a pale blush, which, from the exquisite odour it emits, is much cultivated for distillation. An incredible quantity of rose water is thus prepared yearly in Fajhum, and sold in different parts of Egypt, thence to be exported to other countries. The people of the East, with elegant hospitality, sprinkle it on the hands, face, and head of the guests they mean to honour, and afterwards perfume them with frankincense and the wood of aloes, &c.

By way of introduction to the following lines, I would just add, that they were presented to an afflicted friend, who bade me observe a solitary white rose most rudely blown about by the wind on a stormy evening: —

Thou bidst me mark how yon lone rose
 Bends as the wild wind o'er it blows,
 Then, meekly rising, seems to eye
 With calm submissiveness the sky,
 Though rain and tempest mingling there
 Spread universal gloom,
 To thing so fragile and so fair
 Portending certain doom.

Yet still its soft leaves it unfolds,
 Nor aught of fragrancy withholds,
 Filling with sweets the wind's rude wing
 As though 't were gentlest gale of spring, —
 Thus may'st thou bow the storm beneath,
 Thus meekly re-ascend;
 And thus may praise its incensed breath
 With sigh of sorrow blend.

Without or bud or sheltering spray
 Yon flow'ret meets the tempest's sway,
 Whilst thou in sweet domestic bower
 Art screen'd in sorrow's trying hour,
 A husband's kindly arm thy stay
 When cares and griefs abound,
 And buds of promise fair and gay
 Encircling thee around.

Buds whose young beauties wake the thought,
 With hope and comfort richly fraught,
 That when their opening charms assume
 Their destined character and bloom,
 On this cold earth thou wilt not grieve
 With none to share thy sigh,
 But, loved, protected, cherish'd live,
 And wept and honour'd die.

THE WOODBINE OR HONEYSUCKLE.

LONICERA PERICLYMENUM.

“ So doth the woodbine, the sweet honeysuckle,
Gently entwist the maple.”

WITH this triumphant quotation Sir J. E. Smith would seem desirous to silence all those who aver Shakspeare has committed a somewhat similar error to that of his brother bard, who designates the Honeysuckle the “twisted Eglantine.” I must reluctantly admit, that in many editions of Shakspeare those conclusive words “the maple” are not added; if, however, they be found in any, it is sufficient to vindicate the poet, who, one would wish to believe, was acquainted —

“ With every star the heaven doth shew,
And every flower that sips the dew.”

One is also glad to observe that Milton redeems the error which has called forth so much criticism, by giving this sweet plant, in *Comus*, its proper appellation: —

“ I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied and interwove,
And flaunting honeysuckle.”

The common wild English honeysuckle, or woodbine, is a native of most parts of Europe, growing in woods and hedges, and is also found in the Chinese empire. Fragrant and elegant as it is, it must be a welcome visiter wherever it appears; and few flowers, either for their exquisite odour or for their frail and clinging character, 'have received more poetical eulogy. It may, perhaps, in winding its spiral coil, compress the young tree too tightly, and in some degree injure its circulation; yet it fully compensates the injury, by the grace and beauty of its odoriferous chaplets, which perfume the air to a great distance, especially in cloudy weather, and at morning and evening, when the sun has not power to exhale their sweetness. Thus Cowper celebrates it:—

“ Copious of flowers, the woodbine, pale and wan,
But well compensating her sickly looks
With never-cloying odours, early and late.”

It is, however, in shady situations alone that it assumes the “sickly looks” the poet mentions, for when more exposed to the sun it is beautifully streaked with varying shades of red and yellow.

In common with most of our trailing plants, it climbs from east to west, and its seeking support from every

friendly bough has obtained for 't the ill-deserved name of the "gadding or flaunting honeysuckle." May not fancy indulge the thought that, from conscious weakness,

" To wither'd tree, to old grey stone,
To these, or any thing 't will cling ?"

Laurel wreath for warrior twine,
Thoughts of hard-fought field 't will raise ;
Crown the poet's deathless line,
" 'T is his due, with sprig of bays ;"
Myrtle for the lover bring,
Orange-flower for blushing bride,
And let violets ever spring
Where the dead sleep side by side.

But, from Flora's fairy realm
Token wouldst thou bring for me,
Go where round yon towering elm
Clings the woodbine tenderly ;
Bear me thence one wilding spray,
Just in fancy's ear to breathe
That to thee, my bosom's stay,
Fond I cling as woodbine wreath.

Nor to fancy's ear alone
Doth it kindly thought impart;
Wouldst thou soar, but strength hast none?
Clings to earth thy grovelling heart?
Seek, like yonder fragile flower,
Fitting prop round which to twine—
There's an arm of love and power,
Lean on it, and heaven is thine.

THE WHITE WATER LILY.

NYMPHÆA ALBA.

" Mark where transparent waters glide,
 Soft flowing o'er their tranquil bed ;
 There, cradled in the dimpling tide,
 Nymphæa rests her lovely head.
 But conscious of the earliest beam,
 She rises from her humid rest,
 And sees reflected in the stream
 The virgin whiteness of her breast
 Till the bright day-star to the west
 Declines, in Ocean's surge to lave,
 Then folded in her modest vest
 She slumbers in the rocking wave."

If the rose be queen of the bower, the water lily, from the size and beauty of its corolla and leaves, may certainly aspire to be queen of the stream ; and we are fully prepared to admit the poetical propriety of the Indian name of these lovely aquatic flowers : " Cumuda," or " Delight of the waters." There are several species of this elegant genus, mostly natives of both hemispheres ; of which *N. lotos*, *N. cærulea*, and our own *N. alba*, are

the most noted. The latter is very hardy; not only braving our climate, but being found in much higher latitudes, both in Europe and North America, even near or within the arctic circle. The first mentioned, (*N. lotos*, or *Nilufer*, according to the Indian or Persian nomenclature,) which resembles our common white species, is the true Egyptian *lotos*, and has obtained the greatest celebrity, from the veneration with which it was regarded throughout the East, and from the many mythological fables to which it has in consequence given birth. Not only by the Egyptians, but also by the Hindoos and Persians, it was consecrated to the sun, which they invoked as “lord of the *lotos*,” and represented

“ Robed with light, with *lotos* crown’d.”

It seems, indeed, to occupy the place in their poetry which the rose does in that of the Europeans. In allusion, perhaps, to the world rising from the waters, the Eastern deities are frequently represented seated on a *lotos* flower; a circumstance to which Sir W. Jones, in his imitations of Hindoo odes, often elegantly adverts. In the hymn to *Narayena*, which signifies *moving on the water*, the first rising of the god is thus described:—

" A form cerulean flutter'd o'er the deep,
 Brightest of beings, greatest of the great
 Who not as mortals steep
 Their eyes in dewy sleep,
 But, heavenly-pensive, on the lotos lay,
 That blossom'd at his touch, and shed a golden ray.
 Hail, primal blossom ! hail, empyreal gem !
 Kemel or Pedma *, or whate'er high name
 Delight thee, say, what four-form'd godhead came,
 With graceful stole and beamy diadem,
 Forth from thy verdant stem ? "

And again, in the hymn to Bhavani, the Indian Isis,
 there are the following lines : —

" Whilst on the placid waters blooming,
 The sky perfuming,
 An opening lotos rose, and smiling spread
 His azure skirts and vase of gold,
 While o'er his foliage roll'd
 Drops that impearl Bhavani's orient bed.

 " Mother of gods ! rich nature's queen !
 Thy genial fire emblaz'd the bursting scene .
 For, on the expanded blossom sitting,
 With sunbeams knitting
 That mystic veil for ever unremoved,
 Thou bad'st the softly-kindling flame
 Pervade this peopled frame,
 And smiles, with blushes tinged, the work approved."

* Sanscrit name for the lotos.

The beautiful blue lotos (*N. cœrulea*) grows in Egypt, and in Cashmir and Persia, but not in Bengal, where are seen only the red and white; “and hence is taken occasion to feign that the lotos of Hindustan was dyed crimson by the blood of Siva.”

“ Dire sacrilege! the chosen reed
That Smara pointed with transcendent art,
Glanced with unimagined speed,
And tinged its blooming * barb in Siva’s heart.
Some drops divine that o’er the lotos blue
Trickled in rills auspicious,
Still mark’d it with a crimson hue.”

In China and Japan, the tanks and ponds are generally covered with different species of this elegant genus, whose large and beautiful blossoms are no less fragrant than handsome. This brings me back to our own lovely *Nymphæa*, which, Sir J. E. Smith justly remarks, “is amongst the most magnificent of our

* “According to Hindu mythology, Camdeo, the Indian Cupid, has a bow made of sugar-cane, or flowers, with a string of bees, and his five arrows are each pointed with an Indian blossom.”—But however elegant these fanciful fictions may be, originating as they do in superstition and error, it is delightful to see them at last yielding to the sublimities of truth, and still more delightful to anticipate the time, when not only a few, but ALL our Hindoo brethren shall “walk in the light” even as we.

native flowers." It is, perhaps, also the most noted example of those plants which "dedicate their beauty to the sun;" as its blossoms expand in bright weather, "and in the middle of the day only, closing towards evening; when they recline on the surface of the water, or sink beneath it."

"The sinking of the flowers under water at night," continues the botanist, "having been denied, or at least doubted, I have been careful to verify it in this species. The same circumstance has been recorded from the most remote antiquity. The stimulus of light, which indeed acts evidently on other blossoms and leaves, expands and raises, with peculiar force, these splendid white flowers, that the pollen may reach the stigma uninjured; and when that stimulus ceases to act, they close again, drooping, by their own weight, to a certain depth."

Yes, thou art Day's own flower — for when he's fled,
Sorrowing thou droop'st beneath the wave thy head,
And watching, weeping through the livelong night,
Look'st forth impatient for the dawning light,
And, as it brightens into perfect day,
Dost from the inmost fold thy breast display.

*Oh ! would that I, from earth's defilement free,
Could bare my bosom to the light like thee !
But, ah ! I feel within a blighting power
Marring each grace, like hidden worm the flower,
And, trembling, shrinking, gladly would I fly
That " light of light," Jehovah's piercing eye.*

Yet whither can I go? Oh ! there's a wave
Where he who weeps for sin his soul may lave ;
There would I plunge, and sad, not hopeless, lie,
Waiting the first fair day-spring from on high,
Then glad emerging from the healing stream
Welcome like thee, sweet flower, the dawning beam.

THE AIR-PLANT.

EPIDENDRUM FLOS AËRIS.

Oh ! wrong not fancy, nor with stern rebuke
 Decry her flights ; she hath her sober hours,
 Her sabbath moods, and on creation's book
 With kindling glance the fond enthusiast pores.
 She knows each tone of nature's mighty lyre,
 Knows it and loves ; from evening's gentlest breeze
 To the wild roar which bursts, when in their ire
 For ruthless conflict meet the winds and seas.
 And when with chasten'd feeling thus she holds
 Converse with nature, then nor shrub, nor tree,
 Nor flower that to the sun its leaves unfolds,
 But breathes a text for some pure homily.

THE tribe to which this plant belongs, "take it all in all," is, perhaps, the most singular in its properties and habits of any yet subjected to botanical research. Many of the species, however, are not only singular, but extremely beautiful and odoriferous ; and rising to the tops of the highest trees, —

‘ invest each branch,
 Else unadorn'd, with many a gay festoon
 And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well
 The strength they borrow with the grace they lend."

Their most striking peculiarity is that of being able to live without either earth or water, nay, sometimes almost without air, for Dr. Walsh says, he threw “ a specimen of this genus, which he thought curious, into his port-manteau, where it was forgotten; and many months after, in unfolding some linen, he was astonished to find a rich scarlet flower in full blow: it had not only lived, but vegetated and blossomed, though so long secluded from air, light, and humidity.” Sir William Jones, who blends the enthusiasm of the poet with the research of the philosopher, in his enumeration of the most rare and beautiful blossoms he met with in the East, says of the retuse-leaved epidendrum, “ The flowers are gratefully fragrant and exquisitely beautiful, looking as if composed of shells or made of enamel. This lovely plant attaches itself chiefly to the highest Amras and Bilvas; but it is an air-plant, and lives in a pot without earth or water; its leaves are excavated upward to catch and retain the dew.” He mentions, also, the *Flos aëris*, so denominated from its very extraordinary properties. “ It is a native of Java, and the East Indies beyond the Ganges; the inhabitants of which countries, on account of the elegance of its leaves, the beauty of its blossoms, and the exquisite odour it diffuses, frequently gather it, and suspend it by a silken cord from the ceilings of their rooms; where, from year to year, it continues to put

forth new leaves, new flowers, and new fragrance, excited alone to fresh life and action by the stimulus of the surrounding atmosphere." Another species is held in such repute that, in the Isle of Ternate, none but princesses are allowed to wear its precious blossoms. Scarcely any of this elegant genus were seen here, except in a dry state, before the year 1787, at which period one flowered for the first time in the stove at Kew. Since then, however, though difficult of cultivation, several species, both in spring and autumn, have been seen blooming in the royal garden.

In those bright regions where the rising sun
 Scatters his earliest beams, a wondrous flower,
 Peerless in fragrance and in beauty, blooms.
 Know ye its story? that is peerless too:
 Unlike to other flowers from earth which spring,
 This fairy blossom asks ethereal food,
 And like "some creature of the element
 That in the colours of the rainbow lives
 And plays i' the plighted clouds," soars far aloft,
 Even to the far-spread forest's topmost bough,
 And in "a privacy of glorious light"
 Unbosoms there its fragrance to the sun.
 How meet a lesson this for groveling man!

"To walk with God, to be divinely free,
 To soar and to anticipate the skies," —
 This is his blessed privilege; but he,
 Forgetful of his being's aim and end,
 Gives to this fading world his hopes and fears,
 And bends to other gods besides the Lord
 His willing knee. Alas! what idol shapes
 Do flit before him; pleasure, learning, power,
 Each wooingly assails him; or, if these
 Fail to allure, a softer snare is spread,
 And him, who, but for this, might haply soar
 To that "bright heaven which woos him to its brink,"
 The gentle charities of life enthrall,
 And like a bird in viewless meshes caught
 He feels the toils, but cannot break away.
 Oh, worse than madness, in the precious gift
 To lose the bounteous giver, and thus mar
 The "only bliss which has survived the fall."
 Ah, why not, rather, like th' ærial flower,
 That meekly wise invites each friendly bough
 To aid its flight, communion seek with those
 Who, foremost, mightiest in the high career,
 Would joy "to gird us for the race divine;"
 And, with the kind anxiety of love,
 Still urge our heavenward flight, until we share
 With them the light and bliss which centre there?

THE RUSTY-LEAVED RHODODENDRON.

RHODODENDRUM FERRUGINEUM.

" Whose joy is in the wilderness, to breathe
The difficult air of the iced mountain top."

THERE are several species of the Rhododendron, all hardy mountaineers. One, indeed, (the Rhododendron Caucasicum, whose very name almost makes us shiver,) is a native of Mount Caucasus, skirting the borders of perpetual ice in the highest range of shrubby vegetation. The one which I have chosen, inhabits the high mountains of Switzerland, Savoy, and Dauphiné. " It is an irregular evergreen shrub about eight inches in height; the lower branches, lying on the ground, put out fibres, and hence it may easily be increased without the principal root being disturbed, which, being fixed deep in the fissures of rocks, is not pulled up without much difficulty." Its blossoms are of a beautiful pale rose colour, and hence its name of *Rosa alpina*. There is a variety with a white flower, but it is not common.

Mr. Gilly, in his interesting volume of "Waldensian Researches," mentioning the altitude at which different trees and plants will grow, says that, along with the Alder, this ranger of the mountain will thrive at the height of six thousand feet above the sea. It supplies the shepherds with their only fuel; in hard weather, it is said, the grouse eat it, and the white hares gnaw its bark; but it is only when there is a lack of other food, as animals are not fond of it.

Travellers frequently mention the magical effect produced by the sight of these shrubs, blooming amongst such dreary accompaniments; for, "from some peculiarity of internal structure, alpine plants do not wait for the stimulus of the sun's heat, but exert such a struggle to blossom, that their flowers are seen among the yet unmelted snow."

Raffles alludes to this beautiful shrub "mingling its little crimson blossoms with the scanty herbage which clothes the mountains, rising almost perpendicularly from the sides of the glacier on the summit of Montanvert," and doubtlessly it has gladdened many a traveller's heart, by awakening thoughts of Him

"Who makes so gay the solitary place."

The cheering influence of a small moss on the mind of Mungo Park, when, a stranger in a strange land, he had just been robbed and barbarously treated, is familiar to every one; and who would wonder or grieve that these “beauties of the wilderness” should bloom “where few eyes see them,” if but even in an occasional instance they have served to soothe and animate the desponding, by renewing his impression of the boundless beneficence and superintending providence of God?

‘Gem of the Alps! ’t is strange to trace
 Aught beautiful as thou,
 Glad’ning “the solitary place”
 With unexpected glow.
 Yet, bright one! cold thy bed must be,
 And harsh thy evening lullaby;
 Would thou wert planted in the bower,
 Which summer weaves for bird and flower!
 And rocked to slumber by the gale
 She breathes in yonder sunny vale!’

' Oh tell me not of valley fair
 Where sweeter flow'rets bloom,
 I too have sun and healthful air
 In this my mountain home ;
 Yet, stranger, doth thy sympathy
 Demand some poor return from me ;
 And what if I, frail lowly thing,
 Such lesson to thine heart might bring,
 That thou in after hour should'st bless
 The flow'ret of the wilderness.

Deem'st thou these snows scarce fitting bower
 For aught so fair as I ?
 O know that One whose will is power
 Has shaped my destiny ;
 He spake me into being,—shed
 His sunshine on my alpine bed,
 Bade the strong blast which shook the pine
 Pass harmless o'er this head of mine,
 And gently reared my early bloom,
 Mid snows which else had been my tomb.

View in this mountain's frozen breast
 An emblem true of thine,
 So cold, so hard, till on it rest
 A beam of light divine.

Feel'st thou this life-inspiring ray?
If not, then upward look, and pray
That He who made these mountain-snows
A cradle for the opening rose,
Would deep within thine heart embower
A brighter far than earthly flower.'

THE SENSITIVE PLANT.

MIMOSA SENSITIVA.

“ Weak with nice sense, the chaste Mimosa stands,
 From each rude touch withdraws her timid hands ;
 Oft as light clouds o’erpass the summer-glade,
 Alarm’d she trembles at the moving shade :
 And feels alive through all her tender form
 The whisper’d murmurs of the gathering storm.”

THE diversities of nature are infinite. After contemplating a flowering shrub which scales the highest mountains, and almost braves the region of perpetual snow, we now turn to so delicate a little plant, that a touch, a breath, will cause it to tremble through every leaf; and hence its name of sensitive or humble plant.

These appellations, indeed, designate different species; the sensitive plant on *pressure* only contracts its small leaves which are placed along the midrib, while even the footstalks of the yet more timid humble plant decline at the slightest *touch*. *

* There is a little fern possessing such discriminating sensibility, that it is said to wither at the touch of the human hand, whilst it remains

Both these species are natives of Brazil, and in their proper habitation grow to the height of seven or eight feet. Dr. Darwin accounts for what is called the sleep of the plant, by the absence of the stimulus of light; but more recent observations have disproved this conjecture, as the leaves are found to contract by five or six o'clock in the longest summer days, when the sun remains above the horizon some hours longer; nor do they continue shut till he rises, as they are often fully expanded at the first break of dawn. Their susceptibility also varies greatly according to the degree of temperature in which they are placed; when kept in a warm stove, the smallest drop of water falling on their leaves, nay, even a passing breath, will cause them instantly to collapse. As it is this peculiarity which gives the plant its chief value, it is, of course, generally placed in such a temperature as will be likely to keep this sensitive character in full vigour. There are many

uninjured from contact with any other body. This property has given rise to a conjecture, that plants not only are furnished with a set of vessels similar to our veins and arteries, but may also have what answers to the nervous system in animals; and experiments have been made to prove this, by subjecting plants to the action of certain vegetable poisons known to destroy animal life, by affecting the nervous system alone. The result was, the leaves soon presented a withered appearance, which was followed, in a short time, by the death of the plant

travellers' stories related of the mimosa, to which little credence is given. Some say the Indians extract a slow poison from the leaves and branches, which the root only can remedy: be this as it may, it has been found that no animal browses on it in the countries where it grows, which may perhaps give some countenance to the opinion. " Sensitive plants were not unknown to the ancients; they are mentioned both by Theophrastus and Pliny; indeed, the *Mimosa nilotica* * is said by some writers to be the plant which, accidentally wreathing round a basket with a tile on it, suggested the idea of the Corinthian capital. The mode of growth in this species is singular; ' the stems grow far apart, but the tops are flat, and spread abroad so as to touch each other, and form a verdant canopy, under which the traveller may walk many miles undisturbed by the rays of the most vertical sun.' This is the *Acacia vera*: it grows plentifully in Arabia Petræa and in Upper and Lower Egypt, ornamenting the sandy deserts with its airy, graceful foliage: yet its beauty is its least recommendation; for it supplies us with various valuable gums; the chief of which are gum arabic, frankincense, and succus acacia.

* This, however, is a mistake; the acanthus being the true originator of that exquisitely graceful order.

The only acclimatised representative of this genus which we possess is the acacia of our shrubberies ; but even this elegant specimen can convey but a faint idea of the beauty which large groves of these plants present, especially when they appear, as in Egypt, amongst apparently interminable deserts of burning sand.

Nay, little trembler, shrink not thus
 As though a foe were nigh ;
 I would not harm thy smallest leaf,
 Then let thy terrors fly.

Alas ! 'mongst human kind there be
 Hearts sensitive as thou ;
 Who hear in every tone reproof,
 See frowns on every brow.

Oh ! may I ne'er such dark distrust
 With needful caution blend,
 But rather view, till else I've proved,
 Each stranger as a friend.

THE JASMINE.

JASMINUM OFFICINALE.

——— “ Luxuriant above all
 The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,
 The deep dark green of whose unvarnish'd leaf
 Makes more conspicuous and illumines more
 The bright profusion of her scatter'd stars.”

THE native country of our common white Jasmine is involved in some uncertainty: Linnæus says it may be claimed by India and Switzerland; “ but,” observes Martyn, “ to the latter place it is confessedly exotic, although it is now so accustomed to the climate that it grows spontaneously on the rocks, particularly about Chiavenna.” Miller affirms it to be a native of Malabar and other places in Hindoostan, and some writers say it is wild about Canton.

This shrub was cultivated by Gerarde in 1597; and he remarks that it was then “ common in England, being used to cover banqueting-houses in gardens and arbours.”

The girls of Tuscany, it is said, wear a nosegay of jasmine on their bridal day; and they have a saying, that she who is worthy of being decorated with such a bouquet, is rich enough to make the fortune of her husband. The origin of this custom and its accompanying proverb is thus related:—“A certain Duke of Tuscany, the first possessor of the jasmine, wishing to preserve it as an unique, forbade his gardener to give away a single branch; but love reigned paramount in the gardener’s heart, and on the birthday of his mistress, he presented her with a bouquet, and slid into it a sprig of jasmine. The delighted girl, in order to preserve its freshness, planted it in the open ground: it took root, and the following year was covered with flowers. In the interim she had received instructions on the cultivation of it, and it increased under her care. The girl knew how to profit by the circumstance: she sold her jasmine, and to so good an account, that she was enabled to enrich her lover by the little treasure she had amassed; and their union, which poverty alone had delayed, was happily consummated.”

There are several species of this elegant plant.

—— “Th’ Azores send

Their jessamine; her jessamine remote

Caffraria : foreigners from many lands,
 They form one social shade, as if convened
 By magic summons of the Orphean lyre."

Amongst the most celebrated is the Arabian jasmine, much cultivated in the East for the beauty and fragrance of its blossoms, which possess a scent something like the orange flower, but sweeter, and are held in such esteem, that, the Hindoos, who mingle the most odoriferous flowers in their sacrifices, particularly select those belonging to this species. The women also string them by way of ornament round the neck and amongst the hair.

"Jasmines like a silver spray,
 Fragrant stars and favourites they,
 When Indian girls on a festival day
 Braid their dark tresses."

Nor are the ladies alone indebted to it: of its stems are made the highly ornamented pipes* so needful to the enjoyment of their idle and luxurious lords. Every species of jasmine is almost proverbially fragrant. It is related of the starry Gardenia, or wild Cape jasmine, that, when in full blow, its odoriferous perfume in an

* Dallaway's Constantinople.

evening may be perceived at the distance of many miles, almost verifying the exquisite description of Milton : —

‘ As when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabæan odours from the spicy shore
Of Araby the blest ; with such delay
Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league,
Cheer’d with the grateful smell, old Ocean smiles.”

Our own now almost naturalised species cannot boast such powerful fragrance ; but who that inhales the delicate scent it gives out, especially towards evening, could wish it altered either in kind or degree ?

In early youth, ere life appear’d
The sober thing I since have found it,
Or disappointment yet had sear’d
The garlands with which hope had crown’d it,
How oft I long’d, when thou, fair flower,
At eve thy treasured sweets wert breathing,
To find in some lone glen a bower
Which thy dark mantling sprays were wreathing,
And there, from morn to evening grey,
Muse tranquilly my life away.

But stern realities since then
Have long such idle musings banish'd ;
And at their touch the lonely glen
And jasmine-shaded bower have vanish'd ;
For I have seen the dark grave close
O'er some I loved, perchance too blindly,
And others, who once utter'd vows
Of changeless friendship, look less kindly ;
Still learning, with my added years,
That life has fewer smiles than tears.

But though wild fancy never more
Such fond conceits from thee may borrow,
Yet still I love thee, sweetest flower,
E'en for the hints thou yield'st to sorrow :
Flowers that do bend all meek and pale
When storms arise, submission teach me ;
But when upon eve's chilly gale
I feel thy choicest odours reach me,
Thou show'st me more than how to bend,
Yea, with submission praise to blend.

THE MYRTLE.

“ As in the hollow breast of Apennine,
 Beneath the shelter of encircling hills,
 A myrtle rises, far from human eye,
 And breathes its balmy fragrance o’er the wild.”

To how many classical associations is the myrtle allied ! From its elegant simplicity, and also from its loving to grow near the sea, it was held sacred to Venus ; it was the symbol of magisterial authority ; and it wreathed the sword of him who obtained a bloodless victory. Such were its ancient honours, and these, added to its beauty and fragrance, may well entitle it to the favour of the moderns. Upwards of twenty species of this elegant genus have been discovered in different parts of the globe. The one with which we are most familiar, *Myrtus communis*, our classic favourite, is a native of each quarter. It grows most luxuriantly in Judea, (hence, perhaps, its frequent use in scriptural imagery,) and in the southern countries of Europe, especially in the Mediterranean isles ; and, though not indigenous to England,

it bears without injury the milder winter of Devonshire and Cornwall. It is supposed by some to have been brought here by Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Francis Carew in 1585, after their residence in Spain. Others assign a later date to its introduction; but Evelyn rather corroborates the former notion as to the time of its first appearance amongst us, by stating, in 1678, that "he knew of a myrtle near eighty years old, which had been continually exposed, unless during very sharp seasons a little straw had been thrown upon it."

Gifted as it is both by nature and story, the myrtle seems to be the very subject for the muse; and we find when Milton enumerates "flowers worthy of paradise" he does not forget it. Beautifully does he represent Eve, yet unfallen, in a bower "of roses intermixed with myrtle" at her "pleasant task," "oft stooping to support each flower of slender stalk,"

" them she upstays

Gentle with myrtle band, mindless the while
Herself, though fairest unsupported flower,
From her best prop so far, and storms so nigh."

And again, when he twines the funereal chaplet for Lycidas, for which he culls every thing that is fair and

fragrant without any apparent regard to elegiac character,
he wreathes,

“ Myrtles brown, with ivy never sere.”

Though a low, warm, but well-watered situation best suits this plant; yet is it mentioned by travellers as growing on lofty heights. Tournefort tells us it may be seen adorning Mount Athos with its snowy blossoms and “ unwithering leaf;” and Hasselquist found it on Mount Tabor. It is also often observed blooming amongst rocks; and its delicate beauty, when contrasted with the ruggedness of its abode, seems to acquire an additional charm.

“ And where a dark rock rose behind,
(Their shelter from the northern wind,)
Grew myrtles with their fragrant leaves,
Veil'd with the web the gossamer weaves
So pearly fair, so light, so frail
Like beauty's self more than her veil.”

Yes, take thy station here,
 'Thou flower so pale and fair !
 That I from thee may sweetest lessons borrow ;
 For thou hast that to tell,
 Methinks, which suiteth well
 The lingering hours of languishment and sorrow.*

The cleft rock is thy home,
 Yet sweetly dost thou bloom,
 E'en while the threatening winds are round thee swelling;
 And where's the pamper'd flower
 Can richer fragrance shower
 Than thou, fair blossom, from thy storm-wrought dwelling?

Say, then, though pale decay
 Wear youth and health away,
 Shall sighs alone this troubled breast be heaving?
 Oh no ! I'll bless the chain
 Which to this couch of pain
 Has bound me long, for 't is of mercy's weaving.

What though I tread no more
 The temple's hallow'd floor,
 Whence to our God the full-voiced hymn ascendeth;

* Thoughts in sickness.

Yet may this chamber be
 A blessed sanctuary,
 Where to my whisper'd praise His ear He bendeth.

But chiefly, gentle flower,
 Remind me in the hour
 When 'gainst the tempter's might my soul engages,
 A rock is cleft for me
 More sure than shelters thee,
 Where I may safely hide — "the Rock of Ages." *

* "Rock of ages, cleft for me!"

THE HEATH.

ERICA.

— “ The Erica here,

That o'er the Caledonian hills sublime
 Spreads its dark mantle (where the bees delight
 To seek their purest honey), flourishes,
 Sometimes with bells like amethysts, and then
 Paler, and shaded like the maiden's cheek
 With gradual flushes.”

WITHIN the compass of a very few years, this genus has become an object of great interest, and consequently of improvement. We are indebted to the Cape for most of the elegant species which now adorn our stoves; indeed, so abundant are they there, “that one botanist discovered one hundred and thirty distinct species between the Cape and the nearest range of mountains.” But though so profusely scattered over immense tracts of land in Africa, and common throughout Europe, especially in the more temperate parts of the northern countries, strange to say, no species of heath has yet been discovered in the New World. Comparatively few of this beautiful genus are natives of Great Britain; those, however, that are so

are mostly very abundant, especially in Scotland, which is, emphatically, the “land of brown heath;” there it is to be seen covering large tracts of moorish waste land with its bright and fragrant blossoms, and, along with its elegant and hardy companion, the bell-flower or harebell, tufting every ruined battlement, and peeping between the crevices of every splintered rock. They are thus linked together by the bard who could best appreciate their simple charms:—

“ Let Albyn bind her bonnet blue
With heath and harebell dipt in dew.”

This idea of choosing the heath as a sort of national emblem may have been suggested to the poet by the circumstance of different species being the badges of some of the clans; the *Erica tetralix* (which is depicted in the plate) being the device of the M'Donalds, and the *Erica cinerea*, or fine-leaved heath, belonging to the clan M'Alister. But whilst we delight, when wandering among the wild glens and moors of the Highlands, to see the

——— “ Gentle modest heather-bell
Gladdden its lonely birth-place:”

yet, viewing it as the accompaniment of barrenness and aridity, we cannot regret its absence from the laughing

valleys and cultivated plains of merry England. It is thus regarded in the Prophecy of Jeremiah, chap. vii. v. 6., where, a curse being proclaimed against the "man who maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord," it follows,

"He shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited."

And again, when the prophet foretells the destruction of Moab, he says.

"Flee, save your lives, and be like the heath in the wilderness."

Intimating, very forcibly, that as "the heath in the wilderness" "is out of the reach of observation and discovery, to what a remote distance it would be necessary for the Moabites to fly to escape the danger which threatened them."

The common ling, which, together with the cross-leaved and Cornish heaths, makes up the little group in the accompanying figure, grows freely on the yet uncultivated wastes of England, particularly in Westmoreland and Cumberland.

Hail, beautiful flower ! on the wild moorlands growing,
 Or wreathing the rock with thy garlands so fair,
 That leavest the rich mead where the calm rill is flowing
 For the torrent's vex'd course and the free mountain air.

Hail, child of the Highlands ! what seemlier token
 Could Liberty wish for the fearless and brave,
 When they rush down their mountains with spirits
 unbroken,
 'To claim from the spoiler or freedom or grave?

Since I've view'd thee afar in thine own Highland
 dwelling,
 There are spells clinging round thee I knew not before,
 For to fancy's rapt ear dost thou ever seem telling
 Of the pine-crested rock and the cataract's roar.

Almost as I view thee the breeze of the mountain
 Floats round me with healing and joy on its wing,
 Almost do I hear the wild gush of the fountain,
 And see the dark cavern which cradles its spring.

Then well may I love thee, thou beautiful blossom,
 And hail the low hum of thy murmuring bee;
 For bright are the visions thou bring'st to my bosom,
 And sweet the wild legends thou whisper'st to me.

THE DARK-FLOWERED STOCK-GILLY- FLOWER.

CHEIRANTHUS TRISTIS.

“ ‘ Call back your odours, lonely flowers,
From the night-wind call them back,
And fold your leaves, till the laughing hours
Come forth on the sunbeam’s track ’ ”

‘ Nay let our shadowy beauty bloom
When the stars give quiet light,
And let us offer our faint perfume
On the silent shrine of night. ’ ”

THE *Cheiranthus tristis* is a plant of lowly growth, and perhaps the most homely of the genus to which it belongs. The sombre hue of its blossoms, and their exhaling fragrance only in the night, may probably have originated the appellation of melancholy gilliflower. Many of the double varieties are eminently beautiful, and give out their rich odours so freely in the daytime as fully to deserve the notice of Thomson, who in his enumeration of flowers passes this encomium on the whole family :—

“ And lavish stock, which scents the garden round.”

The Cheiranthus tribe come most honourably recommended to our notice; for Charlemagne, in one of his Capitularies, advises the culture of them, along with roses and lilies. And Perdita, in the "Winter's Tale," says,

' the fairest flowers of the season
Are our carnations and streak'd gillyflowers."

The species under immediate consideration, however, certainly cannot boast of much beauty; but the lack of this is more than counterbalanced by its very rich nocturnal odour.

There seems a peculiar fragrancy in the scent of night-blowing flowers; it is something akin to night-music. No doubt the imagination aids the impression, and, were we free from its entanglements, we should perhaps in this matter come to Portia's conclusion, when she says —

- " I think

The nightingale, if she should sing by day
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things by season season'd are
To their right praise and true perfection!"

· Long hath the lily closed her silver bells,
 And the rose droop'd 'neath evening's dewy spells :
 But thou, still sleepless, to the gale dost spread
 Sweets which might seem from fairy's censer shed ;
 What holds thee waking? — not the guilt or woes
 That oft from human bosoms scare repose.

Let care and sorrow watch the night-hours through,
 Let misers wake to count their hoards anow,
 But flowers, sweet flowers, “ which neither spin nor
 toil,”

Whose little lives are one perpetual smile ;
 Children of sunshine — ye, with day's last gleam,
 Should sink to sleep till roused by morning's beam.'

· The sun has cheer'd me through the livelong day,
 The breeze has fann'd me in its gentle play,
 The dews have fed me, and the summer shower
 Temper'd the fervour of the noontide hour ;
 Then is 't not meet, ere yet I close my eye,
 That I should yield to heaven a fragrant sigh?

Reverse the scene—should threat'ning clouds prevail,
 And loud and louder blow the angry gale,

Still if it spare me on my slender stem,
While round me strewn is many a fairer gem,
Should I not, then, in meek thanksgiving shed
My choicest odours when the danger's fled?

Mortal! bethink thee — if at close of day
Both bird and flower their grateful homage pay,
This in sweet odour, that in tuneful song,
What thankful strains should flow from human tongue?
O think what nobler mercies crown thy days!
Then be thy life one ceaseless act of praise.'

THE MAIDENHAIR.

ADIANTUM CAPILLUS VENERIS.

“ Thy place is not where art exults to raise the tended flower,
By terraced walk or deck'd parterre, or fenced or shelter'd bow'r ;
Nor where the straightly-levell'd walls of tangled boughs between
The sunbeam sweeps the velvet sward and streams through alleys green.”

THE study of plants of the cryptogamic class, besides the comparative novelty of the pursuit, and the admiration it excites from the beauty and wisdom displayed in those minor productions of nature comprehended in this tribe of vegetables, has also another pleasure connected with it. “ It leads the botanist,” says an interesting writer, “ more frequently into wild and secluded scenes ; it draws him from the parterre and the field, to converse with nature in her native garb, on heath and mountain, by untrodden streams and lakes, and along the sands and shores of the ocean.” Ferns rank amongst the most beautiful and elegant productions of this class, and constitute a very comprehensive genus. The number of Ferns at present discovered amounts to between six and

seven hundred, and, calculating on the increasing spirit of botanical research, no doubt it will receive continual accessions. "There are about fifty species in Great Britain, but so much more copious are they in intertropical countries, especially islands, that Plumier collected one hundred and sixty different species in St. Domingo and Martinique alone; and the native ferns of Jamaica, already known, amount to about two hundred." Plants of this class vary greatly in size, some, where warmth and moisture combine their effects, growing to the height of even eighty feet, with stems of proportionate thickness; whilst others may vie with the most delicate and minute specimens of nature's handiwork. Amongst the latter ranks the *Adiantum Capillus Veneris*, so named from its slender capillary stalks, a most beautiful little fern, and from its rarity considered no trifling prize by the botanist, having been only found as yet in some parts of Glamorganshire, in the South Isles of Arran, and on the banks of the Carron, in Kincardineshire. It grows plentifully in the southern parts of France, and in the Mediterranean, on rocks and old ruins. Hasselquist also found it at Damietta, and in the well at the sealed fountain of Solomon near Bethlehem. It is a very succulent plant, and from it the French make a syrup, which, being perfumed with orange flowers, is

called Capillaire. Wonderful properties were formerly attributed to the seed of Ferns, and the procuring of it was considered a deed of some daring, as it involved a contest with the powers of darkness. Grose informs us that a person who went to gather it, reported “that the spirits whisked about his ears, and sometimes struck his hat, and different parts of his body; and at length, when he thought he had got a good quantity, and secured it in papers and a box, when he came home he found both empty!” It was an exploit reserved for St. John’s Night, as the wonder-working seed was supposed only to be visible at the hour of his birth; and when the prize was obtained just “in the very nick of time,” and worn about the person, it was imagined that its possessor might become invisible at will. Thus Shakspeare says,

“We have the receipt of fern-seed, we walk invisible.”

A passage which is thus explained by Johnson:—

“Fern is one of those plants which have their seeds on the back of the leaf, so small as to escape sight. Those who perceived that fern was propagated by semination, and yet could not see the seed, were much at a loss for a solution of the difficulty; and, as wonder always endeavours to augment itself, they ascribed to fern-seed many strange properties, some of which the rustic maidens have not yet forgotten.”¹

For when certain prescribed rites are duly observed, it is thought to predict the fate of unmarried persons, and show them whether or not it will be their destiny, like the rose "upon the virgin thorn," to "grow, live, and die in single blessedness."

This practice and belief is thus alluded to by Bidlake: —

" The village maids mysterious tales relate
Of bright midsummer's sleepless nights ; the fern
That time sheds secret seeds ; and they prepare
Untold-of rites, predictive of their fate .
Virgins in silent expectation watch
Exact at twelve's propitious hour, to view
The future lover o'er the threshold pass."

To those whose fate is fixed, and who have already bowed them to the yoke, the Maidenhair may offer a word of timely counsel.

Of thee, what can I sing or say,
Thou lowly, simple weed?
Tired fancy flags, nor will essay
To wake the tuneful reed.

Thy name might in fond lover's breast
 Poetic thoughts unfold,
 And fairy dreams perchance suggest
 Of tresses bright as gold.

But what to me is lover's dream,
 Or tresses bright and fair?
 Canst thou not start a soberer theme,
 More meet for matron's ear?

Yes, thus thou speak'st — ' My summer prime
 Full soon will pass away,
 And, Lady, thus will ruthless time
 Turn brightest locks to grey.

' But there are charms which do not fade
 When youth and health decline,
 Meet diadem for hoary head —
 O, Lady, be they thine !

' That he who down the paths of life
 Aye journeys by thy side,
 May own, long hence, " how much the wife
 Is dearer than the bride." '

THE COMMON BRAMBLE, OR BLACKBERRY.

RUBUS FRUTICOSUS.

‘ In shady lanes the children stray
 Looking for blackberries through the day,
 Those berries of such old renown !”

IN a work that may perhaps lay claim to something of an ornamental character, it may be matter of wonder that this commonest of all common plants should be admitted among the chosen specimens ; but, as in making the selection, I have had throughout an eye to the moral of flowers, this despised and maltreated shrub seems by no means unworthy of the station it occupies. Something, too, of early reminiscence may predispose one in its favour. Who does not remember the time when “ on a sunshine holyday” a blackberry gathering was the highest treat, and when its insipid fruit was eaten with a relish far beyond that which the rarest hot-house novelty can afford in riper years ? Who does not remember, also, the shrinking awe with which he passed the tempting

branch after Michaelmas day ; believing, with a credulity which would not have disgraced the days of popery, the vulgar superstition that on that day the devil casts his club over the fruit? It is amusing to see how gravely Threlkeld rebuts the tradition. “ I look upon this as a vulgar error,” says he, “ that the devil casts his club over them after Michaelmas ; for the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.”

But, whilst reviving these youthful recollections, we must not forget to notice the connection this plant has with the popular nursery ballad. “ The Babes in the Wood.” However successfully the rising emotion had been combated in the preceding stanzas, the following lines, even at the hundredth repetition, were sure to open the floodgates of childish sorrow :—

“ Their little hands and pretty lips
 With blackberries were dyed,
 And when they saw the darksome night
 They sat them down and cried.”

Nor must Beattie’s allusion to

‘ This tale of rural life, a tale of woes,
 The orphan babes, and guardian uncle fierce,⁴

be passed over; we even now almost share the varied emotion of the infant minstrel whilst reading the following stanzas :—

— “ with berries smear'd, with brambles torn,
 The babes, now famish'd, lay them down to die ;
 'Midst the wild howl of darksome woods forlorn,
 Folded in one another's arms they lie ;
 Nor friend nor stranger hears their dying cry,
 ' For from the town the man returns no more.'
 But thou, who Heaven's just vengeance darest defy,
 This deed with fruitless tears shalt soon deplore,
 When death lays waste thy house, and flames consume thy store.”

Gilpin, the elegant author of “ Remarks on Forest Scenery,” seems to have outlived all these early predilections, for he treats this poor plant most unmercifully. After speaking of various shrubs and flowers which might adorn the foreground of a picture, he says, “ Of all this undergrowth, I know but one plant which is disagreeable, and that is the bramble. It does not hang carelessly, twisting round every support like others of the creeping tribe, but forms one stiff, unpliant curve; nor has it any foliage to recommend it. In short, it is a plant which should not, I think, presume in landscape farther than hath just been allowed: it has little beauty in itself, and

harmonises as little with any thing around it; and may be characterised among the most insignificant of vegetable reptiles."

Shakspeare treats its fruit with as little ceremony; for when Thersites, a scurrilous Grecian, would show his contempt for all the leaders in the camp, he says of Ulysses, "he is not proved worth a blackberry." The former writer does indeed allow it may be seen with effect "scrawling along the fragments of a rock, or running among the rubbish of a ruin."

This reminds us of a passage in Hasselquist's travels, who, on visiting the poor remains of Scanderette, one of Alexander's magnificent cities, observed a species of bramble, before unknown to him, growing among the ruins. His botanical research, unwittingly perhaps to himself, found a just comment on that passage in Isaiah, "Thorns shall come up in her 'palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof." (xxxiv. 13.)

What dost thou here, pale flower?
 Thou that afore wert never seen to shine
 In gay parterre, or gentle lady's bower,
 In lover's wreath, or poet's gifted line.

Why from thy lowly haunts
Art thou now call'd, to have a place and name
'Mid buds whose beauty fancy's eye enchants,
Whose fragrance puts thy scentless leaves to shame?

'Tis that, though suffering ill,
Yea, spurn'd and trodden by each passer by,
Blossom and berry dost thou proffer still,
As all unmindful of the injury.

Hardest of lessons this
To suffer wrong with meekness — few, how few,
The hand which smites unjustly stoop to kiss,
Or blessings on their foemen's pathway strew.

Then welcome, lowly flower !
Welcome amid the fragrant and the gay ;
For which of all the buds in summer bower
Can fitter lesson to proud man convey ?

THE GRASS OF PARNASSUS.

PARNASSIA PALUSTRIS.

————— “ A little flower, milk-white,”
 Which sportive fancy often fondly thinks
 May once have sprung beneath the Muses’ feet,
 And heard Apollo’s lyre.

THE “grass of Parnassus, meek as star of even,” bearing a single leaf and blossom, is the only one of the genus familiar to Europeans; but “several species, abundantly distinguished by various characteristics, are found in America and Nepal.” Its delicate beauty, we may presume, has obtained for it the honourable title of *Parnassia*; and certainly no flower better deserves not only a classic name and abode, but to be the chosen favourite of the Muses themselves. After all, however, there may be something more than fable in the habitat assigned to it, as Dioscorides mentions a plant called “*Gramen Parnassi*,” which in his time grew on that “old poetic mountain;” and assuredly it loves high ground, for we find it thrives best in our own country on moist mountainous pastures and commons.

Ye fairy flowers, whose very name
 To poesy is dear,
 Now tell me—from your classic home
 Why have ye wandered here?

Unkindly is our clime, our dews
 Fall heavily and chill :
 Oh ! how unlike the drops exhaled
 From Castaly's famed rill.

Say, were ye on our banks and braes
 Dropt from the Muse's wing,
 When first she taught our warrior sires
 To wake the tuneful string,

As by your vestal charms she meant
 Her votaries to know
 How fair, how pure, the blossoms are
 Which on Parnassus grow?

Was such your lot in olden time?
 Or, after all, sweet flowers,
 Than merry England's mountain wilds
 Know ye no fairer bowers?

Why that should make ye but more dear
To every British heart,
And win a readier ear for all
The lessons ye impart.

Oh then, whene'er a child of song
Your stainless beauty views,
Remind him not less pure should be
His offerings to the muse.

THE HAREBELL AND GRASS.

CAMPANULA ROTUNDIFOLIA. GRAMEN.

“ As for man, his days are as grass : as a flower of the field so he flourisheth.

“ For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone ; and the place thereof shall know it no more.”

THE exquisite adaptation of scriptural imagery to the subject intended to be illustrated, must be apparent to the commonest observer. Is sublimity required ? “ The heavens above, the earth beneath,” nay, even “ things under the earth,” are put in requisition to give dignity to the subject ; and whilst imagination sinks under the accumulated grandeur of the figures employed, nothing seems strained, nothing out of place. In the same manner, when pathos is intended, what can exceed the touching propriety, if one may so speak, of the illustrations selected ? what, for instance, can form a more mournful comment on man’s earthly history than the simile which compares him to grass, and his glory to

the flower of the field? unless, indeed, we add to it the declaration of Job, “Man that is born of a woman is of few days and *full of trouble.*”

’Twas not to tell of foes subdued,
Or battle spoils to bring,
Th’ appointed herald daily stood
Before the Grecian king.

With solemn shout and trumpet’s clang
Each morn this truth severe,
“Remember thou art mortal,” rang
In royal Philip’s ear.

And why? To ripen into deed
Each high and lofty aim,
And urge him on to win the meed,
The meed of deathless fame.

This record of the olden days
May useful hint supply,
But say, what herald shall upraise
For me the warning cry?

For I have deadlier foes to quell
 Than bow'd 'neath Philip's spear,
 And realms he wot not of, to win,
 Imperishably fair.

A blade of grass—a simple flower—
 Cull'd from the dewy lea,
 These, these shall speak with touching power
 Of “change and death” to me.

For if “stars teach as well as shine,”
 Not less these gems of earth,
 In budding bloom and pale decline,
 May pour instruction forth.

Come, then, and ever when I stray,
 Breathe still the solemn cry,
 ‘Man and his glory, what are they?
 Fragile as grass or flow’ret gay,
 Which blossoms but to die.’

THE TRAVELLER'S JOY.

CLEMATIS VITALBA.

"Some more aspiring catch the neighbour shrub
 With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,
 Else unadorn'd, with many a gay festoon,
 And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well
 The strength they borrow with the grace they lend."

"**TRAVELLER'S Joy**" is the popular name of that species of clematis called *Clematis Vitalba*. It is a climbing shrub, with white almond-like scented flowers, growing best on a calcareous soil. "Its seeds," says Sir J. E. Smith, "have long, feathery, silky tails, forming beautiful tufts conspicuous in wet weather, and will retain their vegetative principle for many years, if kept dry." Of a genus containing above eighty species, this elegant climber is the only one indigenous to Great Britain. Like the ivy, it hangs pendulous from broken precipices or old walls, to which its clinging branches and cheerful blossoms lend a softening grace; and from this circumstance may have originated its well-known and well-deserved appellation of "**Traveller's Joy**."

The following lines were written after rather an extended tour through the Western Isles and Highlands of Scotland. The voyage to Staffa, to which I have alluded in the second and sixth stanzas, was made under somewhat unfavourable circumstances, the weather proving stormy. On our return from it we heard of the wreck of the Rothesay Castle.

We have pierced the lone valley and climb'd the steep
mountain,

Where man and his doings were lost to our ken ;
We have threaded the thicket, and traced to its fountain
The torrent which dash'd through the wild rocky glen.

We have seen the blue lake both at rest and in motion,
Now chafe with the tempest, now peacefully sleep ;
We have trusted ourselves on the bosom of ocean,
And can tell of the perils which frown o'er the deep.

And now, like a bird, to its loved nest returning,
That heeds not of meadows and hedgerows the bloom,
We turn from them all — for each bosom is yearning
To gain the sweet rest and the shelter of home.

Then to close round the fire and tell over light-hearted
 The dangers and fears which no longer annoy,
 With those from whose presence 't was grief to be parted,
 Oh this, surely this is "The Traveller's Joy."

But is joy our sole feeling? Shall nought be awarded,
 When we speak of the past with its pleasures and fears?
 No note of thanksgiving to Him who has guarded
 Our footsteps from falling, our eyelids from tears?

At noontide our path, and at midnight our pillow,
 His mercy protected, His watchfulness blest;
 While others were whelm'd in the dark rolling billow,
 He guided our bark to a haven of rest.

Oh then when we meet and tell over light-hearted
 The dangers and fears which no longer annoy,
 With those from whose presence 't was grief to be parted,
 Let gratitude blend with "The Traveller's Joy."

MEADOW-SAFFRON.

COLCHICUM AUTUMNALE.

" Say what impels, amid surrounding snow
 Congeal'd, the crocus' flamy buds to glow ?
 Say what retards, amidst the summer blaze,
 The autumnal bulb till pale declining days ?
 The God of seasons, whose pervading power
 Controls the sun, or sheds the fleecy shower .
 He bids each flower the quickening word obey,
 Or to each lingering bloom enjoins delay."

MEADOW-SAFFRON is an indigenous perennial plant, but not common. It grows chiefly in the northern and western counties, though it has been found in Suffolk, Oxfordshire, and Staffordshire. It is very rare in Scotland, but Lightfoot mentions it as growing at Alloa, the seat of Mr. Erskine. It was not unknown to the ancients, who averred that it sprang from some drops of the magic liquor prepared by Medea for the restoration of Æson's youth, whence it became a specific for all sorts of diseases. Though this fable might

establish the fame of the colchicum in those early and credulous times, its powerful medicinal virtues attracted the notice of men of science in the middle ages, and still uphold it in repute. The Swiss, indeed, regard it with a reverence which would not have disgraced those who believed in its fabulous origin; and attach the flower to the necks of their children, considering them thenceforth inaccessible to human ills.

For those who look at nature through the medium of the imagination, such blossoms as open late in the year, just at the time —

“ When the green delight
Of leafy luxury begins to fade,
And leaves are changing hourly on the sight,”

have a peculiar charm. They may not be welcomed with that thrilling delight which the first flowers of spring always call forth, yet they awaken many an image and feeling “ pleasant yet mournful to the soul.” To the scientific botanist, the plant under immediate consideration will always be interesting, not only from its reversing the customary order of the seasons, but from its affording an instance of what Paley calls the “ compensatory system.” Its peculiarly forlorn and defenceless aspect had frequently excited his sympathy

till, on investigating its internal structure, he found suitable provision made by the great Author of nature for all the difficulties against which it would have to struggle. "I have pitied this poor plant a thousand times," says he; "its blossom rises out of the ground in the most forlorn condition possible; without a sheath, a fence, a calyx, or even a leaf to protect it; and that, not in spring, not to be visited by summer suns, but under all the disadvantages of the declining year. When we come, however, to look a little more closely into the structure of this plant, we find that, instead of its being neglected, nature has gone out of her course to provide for its security, and to make up for all its defects. The seed-vessel, which in other plants is situated within the cup of the flower, or just beneath it, in this plant lies buried ten or twelve inches under ground, within the bulbous root. The tube of the flower, which is seldom more than a few tenths of an inch long, in this plant extends down to the root. The styles in all cases reach the seed-vessel; but it is in this by an elongation unknown to any other plant. All these singularities contribute to one end. As this plant blossoms late in the year, and probably would not have time to ripen in seeds before the access of winter, which would destroy them, Providence has contrived its structure

such, that this important office may be performed at a depth in the earth out of the usual effects of frost. But then a new difficulty presents itself. Seeds, though perfected, are known not to vegetate at this depth in the earth. Our seeds, therefore, though so safely lodged, would, after all, be lost to the purpose for which all seeds are intended. Lest this should be the case, a second admirable provision is made to raise them above the surface when they are perfected, and to sow them at a proper distance: viz. the germs grow up in the spring upon a fruit stalk, accompanied with leaves. The seeds now, in common with those of other plants, have the benefit of the summer, and are sown upon the surface. The order of vegetation externally is this: the plant produces its flowers in September; its leaves and fruit in the spring following."

The obvious inference, that every "seeming evil" has some counterbalancing good, and every season of life its peculiar advantages and pleasures, gave rise to the following lines, which were presented to a young friend who was regretting each passing birthday.

Why mourn, dear girl, each passing year?
 Why dread the sobering touch of time?
 As if all bliss to mortals dear,
 Thoughts which ennoble, hopes which cheer,
 Fled with our prime.

Look up ! this calm autumnal day
 May want the joyousness of spring ;
 But never did capricious May
 Such kindly warmth, such steadfast ray,
 O'er nature fling.

What though the leaves, now changed in hue,
 Bestrew our path where'er we turn,
 If yonder " heaven's delicious blue,"
 Through the *thinn'd* bough we clearer view,
 Ah ! who would mourn ?

And see, I've brought a little flower,
 No lingerer it of summer's train ;
 Like vesper star to eve's dim hour,
 It comes to deck pale autumn's bower,
 And leaf-strewn plain.

Seest thou my meaning? youthful joy
And hope may fade, like summer's show;
But if thy disenchanted eye
With freer gaze can look on high,
Why let them go.

Yea, go — without or sigh or tear;
For oh! if holier hope be thine,
Think not thou 'lt lack, whilst wandering here,
A beam to light, a flower to cheer
Thy calm decline.

THE MICHAELMAS DAISY.

ASTER SEROTINUS.

“ These few pale autumn flowers,
 How beautiful they are !
 Than all that went before,
 Than all the summer store,
 How lovelier far !

“ And why ? They are the last !
 The last ! the last ! the last !
 Oh ! by that little word
 How many thoughts are stirred ;
 That sister of the past !

“ Pale flowers ! Pale perishing flowers !
 I woo your gentle breath,
 I leave the summer rose
 For younger, blither brows,
 Tell me of change and death.”

By far the larger proportion of this genus are natives of South America, whence they have been brought here. The asters are a numerous tribe ; and, from the variety and brilliancy of the colour of most of them, they make a pleasingly conspicuous figure amongst our autumnal

flowers. Perhaps the most admired species is the China Aster, the seeds of which (according to Miller) were brought from China to France by the Missionaries, where it obtained the name of La Reine Marguerite, or Queen Daisy. But whilst some of these plants assume an almost gaudy appearance, others, which blossom later, have a very wan and sickly hue, harmonising well with the declining season ; on this account we do not deny them that share of our regard which they seem meekly to solicit, but which they certainly would not obtain, did they bloom when the garden is in its prime.

‘ The last brilliant smile of gay Summer has shone,
 Her last rose has blossom’d, is faded and gone,
 Her soft-winged breezes have heaved their last sigh,
 Her bright tints have vanish’d from earth, sea, and sky,
 And the wild gale of Autumn a requiem pours
 O’er sunbeams departed and languishing flowers ;
 Then wherefore, unwarn’d by the dying and dead,
 To yon cold gloomy sky dost thou lift thy pale head ?
 Can it be that thou com’st at this desolate hour,
 To exult o’er the fallen in thicket and bower ;
 Or, ambitious of state, wouldst thou rather thus reign
 When the rose has departed, than bow in her train ?

‘ Oh ! wrong me not thus—not to triumph I come
 O’er the brake without song and the meads without
 bloom ;

For had such been my wish, I had borrow’d the crest
 Of the gay flaunting tulip, or poppy’s bright vest ;

But so homely of form, and so sickly of hue,
 What have I with ambition or triumph to do ?

By the sound of the wind, by the gloom of the sky,

Oh ! I know that the death-pang of nature is nigh,

And I come when the fragrant and bright pass away,

To cheer by my presence her languid decay.

Nor heed I the chill dew upon my breast lying,

’Tis the tear which affection sheds over the dying ;

And the cold and the gloom I do pensively brave,

For I would not that sunbeams should shine on her grave.

O Lady ! should sorrow ere darken that brow

Where hope all unclouded rests cheerily now,

And the throng that now court thee in pleasure’s gay
 hour,

Pass away in thy grief, as with summer the flower ;

May one friend yet be left thee thy cares to beguile,

And to share in thy grief as she shared in thy smile !

’Then think of the blossom which comes forth to cheer

When all else have departed, the fall of the year.’

BLACK HELLEBORE, OR CHRISTMAS ROSE.

HELLEBORUS NIGER.

“ While some few lingering blooms the brow befriend
 Of hoary Winter, and with grace serene
 Inwreath the king of storms with mercy's gentler sheen.”

THIS plant is a native of mountainous situations in Greece, Italy, Germany, Austria, Idria, and Silesia. It is called with us the black hellebore from the dark colour of its roots, and the Christmas rose from the time of its flowering and the colour of the corolla. It was well known to the ancients; Anticyra, a city of Phocis, being famous among them for the hellebore it produced. It was considered a specific for many diseases, particularly for insanity: hence arose the proverb, “Send the madman a voyage to Anticyra.” Horace also notices it in his third Satire, book second: the passage is thus translated: —
 “ By far the largest portion of hellebore is to be administered to the covetous: I know not whether reason does not consign all Anticyra for their use.” This species was cultivated by Gerarde in 1596, but the exact time of its

introduction amongst us is not known. Its roots are still used medicinally, and its pale blossoms, opening in the dreary winter months, cannot fail to attract admiration, giving as they do a mournful grace to the then flowerless border.

What time December's chilling blast
 Has stript each bough the forest thorough,
 One flower yet decks the wintry waste,
 Like friendship in the hour of sorrow ;
 And 'mid the wreck of all that's fair,
 Throws its pale wreaths on Nature's bier.

With lavish sweets or dazzling bloom
 It does not mock her faded glory,
 Nor breathes, to cheat the deepening gloom,
 Of coming spring the flattering story ;
 Rather 'twould rouse our dormant fear,
 And this its theme, the closing year.

The closing year—a startling sound,
 E'en when on youthful ear 'tis pealing,
 For oh ! as Time completes his round,
 This thought must o'er the breast be stealing,

That from sweet Hebe's chaplet gay
 Another rose has pass'd away.

The closing year—a louder note
 For manhood's stormier hour 't is sounding ;
 Athwart the thousand schemes which float,
 The hopes which in his heart are bounding,
 The cares which vex him and enthrall,
 It throws a dark funereal pall.

The closing year—to age, dim age,
 A low and solemn dirge 't is singing ;
 It sternly bids him disengage
 Each hope, each thought, to earth that's clinging,
 And opens to his waning eye
 The grave where he so soon must lie.

The closing year—would that it found
 Youth, manhood, age but meet for glory !
 Then little recks it whether crown'd
 With budding rose, or tresses hoary
 We sink to rest—years then will be
 Merged in a bright eternity !

THE WHITE POPPY.

PAPAYER SOMNIFERUM.

" Within the infant rind of this small flower
 Poison hath residence, and medicine power ;
 Oh ! mickle is the powerful grace that lies
 In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities,
 For nought so vile that on the earth doth live
 But to the earth some special good doth give,
 Nor aught so good, but, strain'd from that fair use
 Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse."

To man, for whom, as a portion of the primal curse,
 painful days "and wearisome nights are appointed,"
 this "precious-juiced flower" must needs be interesting,
 even though it were destitute of any other recommend-
 ation than its soothing properties ; but the poppy
 possesses considerable beauty both in form, colour, and
 mode of growth, and the larger varieties cultivated in
 gardens are eminently handsome. Sir J. E. Smith
 enumerates six species indigenous to Great Britain, one
 of which, *Papaver cambricum*, he says, "is deliciously
 fragrant." This, however, must be an exception to the

rule, as in general the odour of the poppy is strong and disagreeable.

The common scarlet poppy (*P. Rhœas*), which so beautifully mingles its splendid blossoms with “our sustaining corn,” when very profusely scattered, has been thought a proof either of poor land or bad husbandry:—

“ There nodding poppies mock the hope of toil : ”

but if the defendant may be allowed to speak for itself, we shall hear a different story :—

“ That Ceres with my flower is grieved
Some think, but they are much deceived ;
For where her richest corn she sows
The inmate poppy she allows,
Together both our seeds doth fling,
And bids us both together spring.”

Anciently the poppy was consecrated to Ceres, because (according to Grecian fable) its seeds “were the first food the disconsolate goddess was prevailed on to taste after the loss of her daughter Proserpine :” but, strange to say, not the last-named species, the common ornament of our harvest-fields, but *P. somniferum* ; for the statues

of this goddess, yet in being, are all crowned with ears of corn, intermingled with poppies, the heads of which are round capsules like the seed-vessels of the latter, and not oblong like those of *P. Rhœas*.

A fragment of a very fine colossal statue of Ceres, thus decorated, was discovered by Dr. Clarke near the city of Eleusis, which, only after strong solicitation, he was permitted to remove, as the superstitious inhabitants “attributed to its presence the fertility of their land.” This noble monument of ancient skill now graces the university of which this interesting traveller was a member.

The poppy appears to have been one of those plants gifted by the credulous with magical virtues; in reference to which Dryden says,—

“ Seeking my success in love to know,
I tread the infallible, prophetic way
A poppy-leaf upon my hand to lay.”

But from these imaginary virtues, let us turn to such as are of real and universally acknowledged utility. Opium, which mitigates pain and procures sleep—nay, which is a “sweet oblivious antidote” against grief, that sorer malady “which weighs upon the heart,” is the product of the white poppy, hence called *somniferum* : —

“ These poppies white, and violets
 Alcippus on the altar sets
 Of quiet sleep ; and weaves a crown
 To bring the gentle godhead down.”

————— “ from the rock a spring
 With streams of Lethe softly murmuring
 Purls on the pebbles, and invites repose :
 Before the entry pregnant poppy grows ;
 With numerous simples, from whose juicy birth
 Night gathers sleep, and sheds it on the earth.”

Thomson, as a matter of course, introduces it into
 “ The Castle of Indolence.” There is such a languid
 beauty throughout the imagery of the whole stanza, as
 may well apologise for its insertion, whilst considering
 the drowsy qualities of this flower.

“ Was nought around but images of rest .
 Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns between ;
 And flowery beds that slumberous influence kest
 From poppies breathed ; and beds of pleasant green,
 Where never yet was creeping creature seen.
 Meantime unnumber'd glittering streamlets play'd
 And purled every where their waters sheen ;
 That, as they bicker'd through the sunny glade,
 Though restless still themselves, a lulling murmur made.”

But from these poetical pictures we must return to
 sober prose, and reverse the scene ; for, great as are the

blessings resulting from the proper use of opium, the ills occasioned by its abuse are as terrible: for an account of them, let the reader turn to the "Confessions of an English Opium Eater." "I could not," says he, "without effort constrain myself to the task of either recalling or constructing into a regular narrative, a whole burthen of horrors which lies upon my brain."

Happily this pernicious indulgence is not very common amongst us; but in the East, where this drug is made a substitute for those stimulating liquors forbidden to the followers of Mahomet, the practice is fearfully prevalent. Hasselquist mentions several instances of the destructive effects accruing from it, one of which came under his immediate observation. It was that of a Dervise on board the same vessel, who, not having proportioned his store of opium to the length of the voyage, was obliged to be two days without his wonted potion, which reduced him to such a deplorable condition, that he almost feared he should be tempted to seek a grave in the sea. The captain, however, was at last persuaded to land him on the coast of Natolia, where he might obtain a supply of the article so needful to his existence. Another case recorded by him was that of a Persian prince, who had so habituated himself to take opium at certain hours, that he found it impossible to

forego it at the accustomed time. One day, being on a journey, he asked for this baneful stimulant as usual; but, unhappily, his attendants had forgotten to provide themselves with it. Knowing what the consequences might be if he did not soon obtain it, several persons were despatched by different roads to procure a supply; the prince died, however, before any of them returned. This is indeed thwarting the designs of Providence, and turning a blessing into a curse: but what gifts of Heaven have not the unbridled passions of man perverted? Both the use and abuse of this potent drug, and also the method of obtaining it, are well described in the following lines: —

“ There they put the swelling tops
 Of poppy, that towards its bed
 Hangs for sleep a heavy head.
 They cut the moisture, and there drops
 Richly through the balmy air
 Balm that gods have made for care.
 Dangerous to a daring lip
 Is the balm, and fierce with sleep;
 Fierce with what should calmly bless,
 And mortal in forgetfulness:
 But temper'd well and wisely tasted,
 It warms the bosom that lay wasted;
 Smooths pain, and labour, and disease,
 And sheds a magic oil on passion's stormy seas.”

But as a rather more minute detail of the process than poetry allows may not be unacceptable, the following additional remarks are subjoined :—

The great demand for opium occasions the white poppy to be largely and carefully cultivated throughout the East, especially in Asia Minor, whence the best quality is imported. The manner of procuring it is singular. “ When the heads are nearly ripe, they are wounded on one side with a sharp instrument, and a white liquor exudes, which the heat of the sun hardens upon them. This is opium. It is collected next day, when fresh wounds are made on the opposite side of the seed-vessel, the juice issuing from which is similarly collected.”

In putting this and the two following pieces at the close of my work, I have departed from its general arrangement — that of placing each flower according to the time of blowing; as, from the solemn events to which they refer, they appear better adapted than any other for the concluding stanzas; and here I may remark, that throughout these pages it has been my aim, wherever the subject would admit of it, to associate not merely a moral, but a religious, truth with each selected blossom. Gladly have I availed myself of whatever else might usefully or elegantly illustrate the subject; but it has been my main intent to induce devotional

sentiments, and thus to act in the spirit of a pious and profound writer, who has beautifully observed, “ We may visit Athens, but we should dwell at Jerusalem ; we may take some turns on Parnassus, but should more frequent Mount Calvary ; and we must never so busie ourselves about those ‘ many things,’ as to forget that *unum necessarium* ; ‘ that good part which shall not be taken away from us.’ ”

Flower of the healing spell !
 On thee I fix my eye ;
 Yea ; though, with Syren power,
 The rose to her fair bower
 Woos me with perfumed sigh.

True, thou dost lack her beauty,
 Her worship and renown ;
 But place the queenly blossom
 Upon the stricken bosom,
 And can she hush its moan ?

Oh ! no, too much she wakens
 Thoughts keener than her thorn,
 Of days when cares were few,
 And tears, if tears we knew,
 Were light as dews of morn.

Whilst thou, when we do suffer
 The doom we've earn'd too well,
 O'er present woes and past
 With kindly zeal doth cast
 Thy bland oblivious spell.

And then, ah ! then, thy story,
 That puts the rose to shame ;
 For who her wreath hath worn,
 Nor felt how sharp the thorn
 Which guards her graceful stem ?

Whilst e'en to him who wounds thee*
 With meek forgiveness, thou
 Dost yield a precious balm
 His weary frame to calm
 In sickness or in woe.

But, fare thee well ! thy annals
 Bid holier memories rise ;
 I turn me to a page,
 Which should alone engage
 All hearts, and fix all eyes.

* See the description of the manner in which opium is procured, p. 181.

A page of Him that telleth

Whose woes did ours retrieve,

“ Whose stripes our wounds have healed,

Whose blood our pardon sealed ;”

Who died that we might live.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

ORNITHOGALUM UMBELLATUM.

Yes, yes, all have a voice ! the heavens above,
 The earth beneath, and things that under earth
 Lie deeply hidden — all send out a sound,
 And lecture man, the wandering, and the lost,
 In holy lore.

To the “storied” names of certain plants: such as the “passion flower,” the “star of Bethlehem,” &c. the solitary wanderer is indebted for many a pleasing and solemn train of reflection, in pursuing which, he is disposed to say with the poet,

“ To give them thus a tongue
 Is wise in man.”

The flower under immediate consideration grows naturally in most parts of southern Europe, in orchards, vineyards, and thickets; it has been also seen in the neighbourhood of Smyrna. In our island it is held by some botanists as a “doubtful native,” though found apparently wild in many places. “Its petals are

of a brilliant enamelled white on the upper side, and green underneath," and their starlike arrangement most probably suggested the appellation by which it is known amongst us.

Star of the earth ! whose very name awakes
 Memories that ne'er should sleep, but which too oft
 (O shame on thankless man !)
 In deep oblivion lie,

I love thy modest charms, which not to earth
 Enchain the glance they woo ; but rather seem
 To lead it back to heaven,
 And fix it ever there.

Oh ! whilst I gaze thou breath'st a wondrous tale,
 Not of gay summer bird, or murmuring bee,
 Of sunshine and of shower,
 The flow'ret's wonted theme.

But how the opening heaven gave forth to view
 Its glorious inmates, who in chorus sang
 Glory to God on high,
 On earth good-will to men.

And how a new bright star, till then unknown
 To the clear depths of midnight's azure skies,
 Sages from farthest East
 With gifts prophetic * led.

Led—till at last it stood, with fixed beam,
 Where peaceful lay a manger-cradled Babe,
 Low at whose feet they bend
 And their choice treasures pile.

Here stays thy history, beauteous chronicler,
 Sweet sister of that pale mysterious flower
 Which, oh ! how fitly ends
 The tale by thee begun.

* It was the common opinion of the Fathers of the Church, that the offerings of the wise men had a reference to the threefold character of Christ ; that of prophet, priest, and king.

THE PASSION-FLOWER.

PASSIFLORA CÆRULEA.

“ And one more plant my humble muse inspires,
 Round which my parting thoughts would fondly cling
 Which, consecrate to Salem’s peaceful king,
 Though fair as any gracing beauty’s bower,
 Is linked to sorrow like a holy thing,
 And takes its name from suffering’s fiercest hour —
 Be this thy noblest fame, imperial Passion-flower.”

If we are indebted to Africa for most of our choicest
 heaths, we owe to America the genus *Passiflora*, which
 comprehends several species, all of which are eminently
 beautiful. Most of them require artificial heat, repaying
 the care bestowed upon them by the ornamental effect
 they give to our stoves. They belong to the climbing
 order of plants; and some of them — the *Passiflora*
quadrangularis, for instance — are mentioned by tra-
 vellers as hanging their elegant blossoms in festoons
 around the highest trees in tropical forests. In Cook’s
 voyages a curious fact is recorded of this genus, and
 other plants of similar character. So closely do they

interlace the branches of the most gigantic trees, that, even when their trunks have been severed, they are prevented from falling by this apparently fragile, but firm support.

Châteaubriand gives a vivid description of the luxuriance of this species of tropical vegetation. "Trees of all forms, of all colours, and of all perfumes," says he, "grow mingled together, overhanging the currents of the stream, scattered through the valleys, or ascending the steep sides of rocks and mountains, to inaccessible heights, whither the eye is pained by following them: the wild vine, the Bignonia, the Paullinia, interlace at the foot of these, scale their branches, and creep to the very extremity of their boughs; from whence they sweep in festoons, from the maple to the tulip-tree, from the tulip-tree to the mahogany; forming grottoes, vaults, and porticoes, endless in numbers and variety. Sometimes, straying from their supports, the Lianes traverse creeks of the rivers, over which they stretch verdant bridges, radiant with flowers: from the bosom of these masses, the magnolia elevates its stately pyramid, surmounted with dazzling white roses, and towers over the forest without a rival, except the palm, which balances near its fanlike leaves." There may be something too much of poetic colouring in this glowing picture of the

lively Frenchman; yet the more sober language of the philosophic Humboldt conveys nearly the same idea, and almost overwhelms the mind with the astonishing luxuriance of these gigantic climbers. He describes *Bauhinia*, Passion-flowers, &c. clinging round the forest-trees, till it is difficult for the naturalist to trace the different stems, leaves, and flowers. A single tree thus profusely decorated, he observes, “forms a mass of vegetation, which, if separated, would cover a considerable space of ground.”

The species of the genus *Passiflora*, chosen to illustrate the present work (*Passiflora cærulea*), is now so far naturalised as to bear, with very little attention, our ordinary winters, and is a most elegant appendage to whatever it may attach itself. But to the imaginative florist, its beauty and elegance do not form its main attractions; to him it derives, along with its name, its greatest interest from the prevalent notion that all the instruments of Christ's passion are represented in it, and

“ Whatever impulse first conferr'd that name,
Or fancy's dream, or superstition's art,
He freely owns its spirit-touching claim,
With thoughts and feelings it may well impart —

Not that he would forego the surer chart
 Of Revelation for a mere conceit ;
 Yet with indulgence may the Christian's heart
 Each frail memorial of his Master greet,
 And chiefly what recalls his love's most glorious feat."

The frequent allusion to flowers in holy writ, and above all (with reverence be it spoken) their connection with the history of Him "whom to know is life, and joy to make mention of His name," seems to invest them with a sacred character. He referred us to them for instruction. He wore their thorns, and,

"Circled by them, He sank awhile to rest,
 Not the grave's captive, but a garden's guest ;"

and finally He has won for us

"The thornless crown of amaranthine bloom."

Oh ! ne'er with cold and careless glance gaze I on thee,
 sweet flower,
 Nor thoughtless pluck thee as I'm wont thy sisters of
 the bower,
 No—fancy gifts thee with a spell unknown to all beside,
 Which checks the hand thy beauty woos, "and quells
 the glance of pride."

Each flower some fairy legend owns to joy or sorrow
 dear,
 Or simply beautiful, just such as wins gay childhood's
 ear;
 But both to aged and to young, from cot to lordly hall,
 Thou, thou hast that to tell should hold each human
 heart in thrall.

Each flower some chosen emblem is; one is for beauty's
 bloom;
 Another friendship claims; a third sheds fragrance o'er
 the tomb;
 But link'd with holy memories, to penitence how dear!
 Thy shrine is aye the broken heart, thy dew contrition's
 tear.

Would I such shrine could offer thee, and on thy pale
 leaves shed
 Those sadly sorrowing tears which fall but when the
 heart has bled,
 But, ah! like sealed fount, that heart witholds the
 tribute due,
 Though lesser sorrows find it still to gentle pity true.

Yet dear I hold thy sacred lore, and oft with curious
eye

Do trace the mystic characters which in thy bosom lie,
Types of those fearful instruments of agony and scorn ;
The cross which bore the Lord of life, the nail, the
twisted thorn.

And now of many a cultured flower, and many a wilding
spray

I've sung, but thou the fittest seem'st to grace my closing
lay ;

Then come, and round my simple harp thy wreaths
symbolic fling,

Lest meaner theme again should wake its consecrated
string.

